THE LIFE OF
ANTONIO ROSMINI-SERBATI

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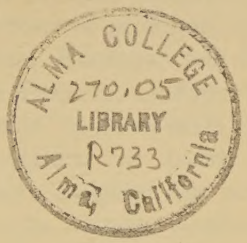
THE LIFE OF ANTONIO ROSMINI-SERBATI

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF

THE REV. G. B. PAGANI
PROVINCIAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF CHARITY IN ITALY



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PROTESTATIO

Cum SS. D. N. Urbanus Papa VIII. die 13 Martii 1625 in Sacra Congregatione S. R. et Universalis Inquisitionis Decretum ediderit, idemque confirmaverit, die 5 Junii 1634, quo inhibuit imprimi libros Hominum, qui Sanctitate, seu Martyrii fama celebres e vita migraverunt, gesta, miracula, vel revelationes, seu quæcumque beneficia, tanquam eorum intercessionibus a Deo accepta continentes, sine recognitione, atque approbatione Ordinarii, et quæ hactenus sine ea impressa sunt, nullo modo vult censeri approbata. Idem autem Sanctissimus die 5 Junii 1631 ita explicaverit, ut nimirum non admittantur Elogia Sancti, vel Beati absolute, et quæ cadunt super Personam, bene tamen ea, quæ cadunt super mores, et opinionem ; cum protestatione in principio, quod iis nulla adsit auctoritas ab Ecclesia Romana, sed fides tantum sit penes Auctorem. Huic Decreto, ejusque confirmationi, et declarationi, observantia, et reverentia, qua par est, insistendo ; auctores profitentur se haud alio sensu, quidquid in hoc libro referunt, accipere, aut accipi ab ullo velle, quam quo ea solent, quæ humana dumtaxat auctoritate, non autem Divina Catholicæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ, aut Sanctæ Sedis Apostolicæ, nituntur. Iis tantummodo exceptis, quos eadem Sancta Sedes, Sanctorum, Beatorum, aut Martyrum catalogo adscripsit.

PREFACE

VIRGIL'S enthusiastic greeting to his native land of Italy—

"Salve magna parens frugum . . . Magna virum,"

has not lost its justification in subsequent ages; it has been, if anything, rendered still more true during the course of the Christian era. As centuries roll by, Italy produces men and women eminent for sanctity as for learning, and particularly in the Founders of various religious orders and congregations, great and small. The land of Benedict and Francis, of the "Seven Founders," of Cajetan and Zaccaria, of Philip Neri and Jerome Æmilian, of Alphonsus Liguori and Paul of the Cross, produced in the nineteenth century at least three men worthy to take their place in the illustrious bede-roll—Giuseppe Cottolengo, Giovanni Bosco, and the object of this biography, Antonio Rosmini Serbati.[1] It would not be easy, perhaps, to find three men so different in character and career, whose works lay in such varied directions, and whose Institutes which have survived them, have ramified into fields of work so unlike one to the other. But they shared a common Faith on the one hand, and common blood and speech on the other. And so Catholic Italy may well be proud to inscribe them in her *Libro d'Oro*.

Of the three, the name of Rosmini has become far more famous in the regions of polemical Philosophy than in those wherein he has an equal claim to high rank: I mean as a holy priest, as a religious Founder, as a Spiritual Master. It is important that this side of his character and life-work

[1] Their lives overlapped to a considerable extent(Cottolengo, 1786–1842; Rosmini, 1797–1855; Don Bosco, 1815–1888), and together cover just a century.

should be well brought out; without a full appreciation of it, it is impossible adequately to know the man and understand his providential mission in the Church of the last and present centuries.

For us in England, it is this aspect of Rosmini and his work that is particularly significant. In a paper entitled "A Forgotten Chapter of the Second Spring,"[1] I have elsewhere tried to show the indebtedness of the Church in England in its "Second Spring," during the first half of the nineteenth century, to the work of the Rosminian Fathers, sent over by their Founder in 1835, long before Newman's conversion and the wonderful days of "The Oxford Movement." As will be seen in the present volume, the Fathers were the first itinerant missioners to evangelise this country since the Reformation. In fact, "Missions," in the specific sense of occasional or periodical spiritual exercises preached to whole congregations, so characteristic a feature of modern Catholic life, were introduced into this country and Ireland by the Fathers of Charity. To them, too, we owe the introduction of the Quarant' Ore and the popular devotions of the Month of May, all potent factors in the resuscitation of Catholic life and practice in our midst. If I emphasise these historical facts, it is because they have been a good deal forgotten, and because they indicate the indebtedness of the Church in these lands to the Institute of Charity and therefore to its Founder, Antonio Rosmini.

The Society founded by him is not very extensive in these islands. The houses are few, the members not very numerous; yet they are engaged in a quiet, unobtrusive way in a variety of good and useful works. Their work as itinerant missioners has, since the days of Gentili, Furlong, and Rinolfi, fallen largely upon the shoulders of other Orders and Congregations. They still have the charge of several large parochial missions; they have their share, too, in Secondary Education, in the management of

[1] Now republished in my *Sketches in History*, Washbourne, 1906.

Reformatory and Industrial Schools, and conduct an excellent and flourishing printing-press.

In Italy, particularly in Northern Italy, this influence has been much more extensive, particularly in raising the educational and spiritual level of the clergy, and in promoting Catholic literature.

The above remarks are concerned more with Rosmini's creation, the Institute of Charity, than with the personality of the Father Founder himself. For that, the reader is referred to the pages of this book. My object has been rather to attract attention to it by indicating the significance of Rosmini's work in the growth and development of our Church. But of course the Life has a wider and broader interest for all those who are attracted to the study of the characters and careers of the great men of Christian history, and amongst these we may justly claim a position of no little importance for Antonio Rosmini-Serbati.

LOUIS CHARLES,
Bishop of Salford.

St. Bede's College.

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THE LIFE OF
ANTONIO ROSMINI-SERBATI

CHAPTER I

HIS INFANCY (1797–1804)

ANTONIO ROSMINI-SERBATI was born at Rovereto in the Tyrol on the 24th March 1797, and baptized on the following day, the feast of Our Lady's Annunciation, in the parish church of St. Mark. His parents, Pier Modesto Rosmini, a Tyrolese nobleman of the Holy Roman Empire, and Giovanna Formenti, a lady of noble birth from Biacesa, gave little Antonio the additional names of Francesco, Davide, and Ambrogio at baptism, to which the name of Giovanni Baptista was added in confirmation; hoping, no doubt, to see reproduced in him the lofty heroism of his ancestors who had borne them. If so, their expectations were surely realised in this happy child, who was to be the last of his race, and we may well believe that he was the fruit of a solemn benediction which Pope Pius VI. had bestowed on Rovereto when he visited the town some few years previously.

In after years Antonio Rosmini esteemed it a great privilege to have been born on the eve of the Annunciation and made a child of God by holy baptism on the feast itself, and it was a powerful stimulus to his devotion to the Incarnate Word and His Blessed Mother. In one of his diaries he wrote: "God showed me that our Lady was always to be my mother and protectress by the favour of being born on the vigil of the feast of her Annunciation, and such I have always found her, though I have been the

most ungrateful of clients and sons. Now, at least, may I begin to respond to the love of my dearest mother, and to love her henceforth as I hope to do for all eternity. The goodness of God 'who first loved me' was further shown by the fact that, on the feast of the Annunciation of the Angel to our Blessed Lady, I was born again in the saving waters of baptism."

The Countess, his mother, was an enlightened Christian, who devoted herself to the care of her little boy and nursed him herself. It was only in the course of time that she engaged Teresa Tacchelli to attend to little Antonio and his baby brother, whilst she herself exercised the most minute supervision over the nursery.

Antonio's mental development was extraordinary; at two years of age he wondered as he lay in his cot why the nurse placed the light where he could not see it. When he was between three and four, his uncle Ambrogio said to him one day, as he was dandling him on his knee, "Be quiet, or I will flip you out of the window!" This was enough to make him think over in his little mind what a very strong man his uncle must be, to do so much with a jerk of his finger!

All the child's natural goodness of heart manifested itself in proportion to the development of his intellectual faculties. He was even-tempered, gay, cheerful, and affectionate towards all, and was never known to cry or complain when anything disagreeable happened; so that he became a universal favourite. One day, however, when some accident occurred, little Antonio looked quite sad, but the remark made in his hearing, "Ah, well, this is no real misfortune; there is no real evil but sin," struck him so much that he at once regained his cheerfulness, and he would often repeat the simple words as a never-failing source of consolation in the afflictions of his after life.

A happy inclination to benevolence was soon transformed by grace into Christian charity, and we have touching instances of his compassion for others and his ingenious

efforts to relieve those in want. He would beg to be allowed to take his lunch or a supply of money with him when he was going out, so as to have something to give to any poor people he might meet with on the road, and would gently insist until his request was granted. At six years of age, having heard the words "Let him that hath give to him that hath not," he took off the new stockings with which his mother had supplied him, and threw them out of the window to a poor woman who was passing by with a little child shivering and barefoot.

There were many powerful incentives to piety and virtue in the little boy's surroundings. His excellent parents and his uncle Ambrogio helped him by their words and example; the servants were all dutiful and pious, whilst his young companions were everything that could be desired. Margherita, his sister, two years his senior, Giuseppe, his younger brother, and Antonio Fedrigotti and Leonardo Rosmini, his cousins, were all remarkable for their goodness and innocence. Sometimes they chatted together, at other times joined in prayer, and again amused themselves by playing games suitable to their age. But even in their play there was nothing frivolous, games of skill being preferred to those of chance, and especially if they tended to inculcate a good moral or could be made a source of instruction. When they played the game of "Catch Thief," Antonio always liked to be the judge, in order that he might, when pronouncing sentence, give a little lecture upon the necessity of leading a good life. They also made for themselves separate cells in the garden, into which each one would retire for a time, and then come forth again to sing hymns in company, in imitation of monks chanting their office.

It was to his devoted mother, however, that he owed his real education. She was indefatigable in her care of her little son; she spared no pains to lead him to love heavenly things, to hate sin, and to practise the virtues of a Christian child. I will relate only one of her ways of teaching her

children to deny themselves and to sacrifice innocent pleasure for the love of God. Before supper she would sometimes gather them round her near the table spread with many delicacies—fruit, sweets, and other good things—and, telling them stories from the Gospel, would dwell on the privations and sufferings endured by our Lord to atone for our sinful gratifications; upon which the little ones, touched by her words, would of their own accord take the plainest food for their meal, and leave the delicacies displayed before them. Such was the school in which Antonio was taught so early to restrain his desires, and to gain that perfect mastery over himself which fits a man for great undertakings.

When he was between five and six a tutor named Runck began to teach "Tonino," as he was affectionately called, to read and write. The Bible was his first reading-book, and while he spelt out the syllables the child's soul began to drink in divine truth from that inexhaustible source. The Acts of the Martyrs and the Lives of the Saints were next read by him with great delight, his tender heart being often so deeply touched that he was moved to tears. An extraordinary thirst for learning possessed him even at this early age, and his mother tells us that she often had to take his books away lest he should injure his health by too much study, and at night she was obliged to see the light put out in order to induce him to sleep.

Such was Antonio Rosmini's infancy—a fitting prelude to his after life. His uncle Ambrogio, who was a lover of painting and devoted to his little nephew, has preserved his features for us in a profile portrait. He is depicted as a little boy of six or seven with delicately moulded features; the sweet ingenuousness of infancy with all its attractions sits on his brow and shines in his eyes and in his smile; whilst there is at the same time a certain dignity, almost gravity, of expression which excites reverence as well as love. This reverent love was the feeling he inspired in all around him. What was most impressive, and imparted the

greatest charm to his natural goodness, was a profound sense of the supernatural, so much deeper in him than is usual in little children.

He had no sooner conceived the idea of God—that idea so lofty, yet so accessible to the Christian child—than he became profoundly impressed with, and, as it were, absorbed in the greatness and loveliness of the new object presented to his mind. His heart at once began to glow with that fire of charity which thenceforth was never extinguished in him. From the same source sprang an ardent and tender devotion to her whom Holy Church teaches us to invoke as a Mother. Writing to a friend of his love for our Lady and of her protecting care of him, he says : " Mary the Mother of God must ever be what she has been from my infancy, my advocate and patron."

His mother, recalling his early childhood many years later, did not hesitate to say that " he was a child prevented by divine grace " ; his good nurse spoke of him as " a little angel," " a holy child," and with the instinct, almost foresight, of a simple and upright soul, she religiously kept his clothes and playthings, for something seemed to tell her that he would become a great and holy man.

CHAPTER II

BOYHOOD AND EARLY STUDIES (1804–1812)

THE public schools of Rovereto, which had been closed during the revolution, were re-opened about the year 1804, and Pier Rosmini decided that Tonino should acquire the first elements of letters amongst the children of his native place. The little boy was delighted at the good news, and ran off to his uncle's library to get some large volumes, which he desired one of the servants to carry to the school for him, " because," he said, " I am going to learn wisdom now." A priest of Rovereto, Don Francesco Guareschi, a very simple man, but as good as gold, was entrusted with the care of the new scholar. He was to conduct him to school, superintend his studies at home, and accompany him in his daily walks. Though the good priest was not exactly a master, Antonio Rosmini, with his usual graceful recognition of any service, continued to address him in after life as *Signor Maestro*, and kept him in his own house until his death.

Although the school year was well advanced when he entered on his studies, the little scholar received a prize at its conclusion ; not quite to his own satisfaction, however, for his keen sense of justice made him grieve to see those who had worked all the year left without a prize, which he thought his few months of labour had not deserved so well. Guareschi kept him another year in the first class and then passed him at once into the third, and the following year into the fourth.

It was in 1808 that he entered the grammar school of his native town and began his Latin course, at which time he made two characteristic resolutions : first, to turn every

moment of time to account; secondly, to persevere in reading regularly. He began at once to put them in practice by taking up Raymond's *Reflections on the Old and New Testament*, Rollin's *Roman History*, Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, Muratori's *Annals*, and a number of works on mathematics, drawing, perspective, architecture, and sculpture, making copious notes and extracts, many of which are still in existence. He began in childish fashion to glean and coin phrases for future use, choosing, arranging, and summarising them in his note-books, selecting from the various works only what he considered valuable, and rejecting unimportant matter as a useless burden. His determination and industry are evidenced in a little plan for avoiding waste of time and weariness during this self-imposed study. This was, to arrange on chairs round the room a number of books on different subjects, and not to go to bed till he had read a certain portion of each. As night came on his mother would appear, but he knew how to ward off her gentle reproof by trying affectionately to engage her interest in the subjects which engrossed his own attention. Some tried to moderate his ardour for study by quoting the proverb, "Better be a live donkey than a dead professor": this was not his opinion, for he loved study enough to be willing to shorten his life in its pursuit, if necessary.

Antonio carried off a prize at the end of the first year in the Latin class, but in the second year, parents and masters were disappointed. Occasionally Don Guareschi brought home complaints from the school, and the father and mother showed some displeasure; his uncle was the only one who took the boy's part. The fact was that grammar in no way interested him, and he had to force himself to study it; while the books supplied by his uncle, who understood the child's bent, were more congenial, and gave his mind the food for which it craved. Had Guareschi been a man of culture, he might easily have guessed how matters stood, for he one day surprised his pupil intent on the

Summa of St. Thomas. The good, simple man, wondering what it could have to do with the rudiments of grammar, took it out of Antonio's hand, and tapping him on the head, said sharply, "What have you to do with such books as this?" But the tap seems to have made little impression, for the *Summa* was frequently to be found in his hand notwithstanding. Still, his uncle's patronage did not save him from being left without a prize at the end of the year, and poor Tonino felt it keenly, especially as it was the first time, and entailed another year in the same class amidst the troubles of Latin grammar. This disappointment was a spur to fresh exertion: he made up for lost time, and in the autumn of 1811 he was promoted from second to fourth class.

The next year was devoted to the study of the Italian and Latin classics, in which he took great delight; yet from the first, his interest was in the ideas they contained rather than in the mere literary form. He collected the sayings of ancient writers, which he greatly admired, and arranged them methodically in note-books, selecting the most pithy from Xenophon's *Anabasis*, Plutarch's *Morals*, the works of Seneca and Boëthius, and *The Teachings of the Ancients*, by Brother Bartolomeo of S. Concordio. The result of these private studies, pursued in his own little room, did not appear until the close of the scholastic year, when he produced a *Letter to a Friend encouraging him to study*—the theme set for examination—written in such excellent style that his master was amazed, and could scarcely believe it the work of one so young. "Bravo!" he said, "if you go on like this, you will do credit to yourself and your family, and become a famous man." The praise was not to Antonio's liking, and he could take no pleasure in it; he was too sincerely pious and modest to glory in praise, or to look on the approval of men as an end worthy of a Christian.

These commendations were not the only result of his successful examination; a highly valued friendship was

begun on that day, for the well-written thesis led Don Pietro Orsi to seek the acquaintance of the boy who showed such promise, and the holy and learned priest was soon the protector, counsellor, and guide of Antonio; indeed Rosmini wrote significantly in his diary, "He was just what I most wanted in the world."

Few as are the details left to us of Antonio's first studies, they are not without interest: it is always delightful to go over the ground traversed by great minds and note their exemplary diligence, a lesson valuable even to those less gifted.

Antonio's development was great in every respect: the wisdom which had made him avoid everything frivolous, even in his childish games, grew with his years. He found little to attract him in ordinary amusements; whenever he could do so without want of courtesy, he would spend the time in prayer or study. The Rosminis had a pretty little country house on a hill just outside Rovereto, and this was a favourite resort of Tonino's, where he could enjoy the beauties of nature and converse with God. About this time his parents engaged a dancing master for him and his sister; he expressed his feeling on the subject by saying that "a priest need not learn to dance," showing what his inclination was. His sister being of the same opinion, they talked the matter over, and contrived to put it very gently to their master and their parents that these lessons would only be time and money thrown away. Antonio occasionally went to the theatre with his father and mother, and enjoyed the plays, particularly tragedies, which touched him deeply and raised his heart to God, whom he found by devout prayer in the very place where so many lose Him.

It was the one desire of his heart to please God alone, especially in his studies, which he directed solely to the glory of God; and lest he should lose sight of this, he wrote short sentences in his books to serve as reminders. In one we read, *Soli Deo honor et gloria*, in another, "Love God with thy whole heart, with thy whole mind, with all thy

strength"; in a third we find the words of Solomon, "To know Thee is perfect justice and to know Thy justice and Thy power is the root of immortality." [1] These are proofs that he loved God more than knowledge, and studied only for His sake.

Home was the sanctuary in which the virtues of little Antonio blossomed in secret. As he grew up their fragrance became more apparent, especially amongst his companions, who paid a spontaneous tribute of affection to the boy whose innocence, dignity of manner tempered by cordiality, kindly speech, sincere and tender piety, won all hearts. Above all, his unassuming modesty, notwithstanding his rare intellectual endowments and solid virtues, gave him a powerful influence over these friends of his early years. He loved his schoolmates, and they in return loved him; his friendship was soon won by the best amongst them, whether the children of tradespeople or the poor, and some of his strongest and holiest friendships, which were his comfort in the sorrows of later life, date from his school-days. His affections were pure and holy from his earliest years, like the pure and virginal serenity of his countenance, and he could express this as follows in youthful verse on *Friendship* :—

"Nè dopo ch'io fui pieno
D'amor di ch'ella è fabra,
Mai di vergogna o di dolor mi morsi.
Onestissimo amor! leggiadra sorte
Ch'io manterrò s'anco m'invidia Morte."

Such was the childhood of Antonio Rosmini, and the maturity of judgment and conduct displayed in these years may be well expressed in the words applied to Tobias: "And when he was younger than any, yet did he no childish thing in his work." [2]

[1] Wisd. xv. 3.

[2] Tobias i. 4.

CHAPTER III

HIS YOUTH: STUDIES AND VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD (1812–1814)

THOSE terrible crises which disturb the early years of most men were unknown to Antonio Rosmini; by the special providence of God his faculties developed in an even and tranquil course during his youth as they had done in his childhood.

In the lives of men destined for great things there is usually an epoch when the soul becomes possessed by some lofty idea which dominates the whole being—thoughts, affections, actions—all are ruled by the ideal that has taken possession of the mind. This was the case with Antonio as he emerged from childhood; the idea presented to him by the Divine goodness was a clear conception of the vanity of temporal things and of the infinite value of things eternal, in which alone true wisdom is to be sought. His Diary records the fact in simple but memorable words at the beginning of 1813. "This year," he writes, "was a year of grace for me; God enlightened me about many things, and I realised that there is no wisdom except in God." Here we have the light which illumined his whole life from his youth onwards, and no true or adequate concept of his moral grandeur can be obtained unless we keep this in view.

In the autumn of 1812 Antonio studied Humanities at the public school of Rovereto under the Rev. G. B. Locatelli; the following year he passed on to Rhetoric under the Rev. Carlo Tranquillini, whom he describes as a holy and genial priest and a man of enlightened mind; but, in fact, he was his own best master. During those two years his time was chiefly devoted to the Italian and Latin classics,

Virgil and Petrarch being special favourites, whether on account of the singular delicacy of taste he discerned in their works or the gentle sadness they seem to breathe forth. Perhaps he had some presentiment of the coming sorrows with which he would himself be tried, or it may be that God was preparing him by these considerations for the future trials that awaited him. It was only natural that while studying the classics he should cultivate poetry, and strive to express his feelings in verse when prose seemed too feeble a medium for the deeper emotions of his soul; yet Antonio Rosmini was to be a poet, not so much by his verses as in his philosophy and in his life. In those early poems there is a noteworthy absence of the classical and mythological allusions in vogue at the time, as if he foresaw the new path which would soon open to Italian literature under the leadership and guidance of Alessandro Manzoni. He gave some attention to drawing, which he had learnt as a child. A delicate temperament and keen appreciation of the beautiful rendered him an ardent admirer of nature, while his natural taste was encouraged and developed by the conversation of his uncle Ambrogio, who was both architect and painter, and would describe enthusiastically the works of art he had seen, point out the beauties of his own rare collection of prints, explain the characteristics of the various schools, and arouse Antonio's admiration and love of the great masters, Raphael in particular. However great his love of literature and the fine arts, the higher studies of philosophy and religion were his chief attraction. Not satisfied with Cromazione's *History of Philosophy*, and not finding his knowledge of Greek as yet equal to the reading of the original, he read Ficino's translation of *Plato*. Assiduous study of the Holy Scriptures soon made them familiar to him, and he read the most celebrated apologists for the Christian religion, as well as the Fathers and Doctors of the Church; St. Augustine, Lactantius, and St. Thomas Aquinas being constantly in his hand.

It will interest the reader to learn something of the

extraordinary labours of this youth of seventeen, from a brief enumeration of the chief compositions he wrote in these two years of school life, whilst his daily tasks were faithfully performed without intermission. In 1813 he undertook a lengthy work entitled *Reason Speaking to Man ;* wrote dialogues on *Friendship*, on *Love*, and on *Charity ;* a discourse in praise of the Priesthood and another in praise of Friendship ; and, either in this same year or the following, a little work on the text-books required for the grammar school of Rovereto. In 1814, besides several discourses and sonnets, he wrote some *Veglie* after the style of Young; began a great poem, in which he intended to describe all the varieties of human life ; wrote a book entitled *Thoughts*, and recast the *Day of Solitude*, a work written in thirteenth-century style after the manner of the *Consolation* of Boëthius. About this time he planned a Dictionary to approach perfection as far as possible ; to accomplish which task he ransacked the classics and gathered materials for a reprint of Crusca's celebrated Dictionary, with a view to correcting the errors of the Venetian edition.

It was quite evident at the close of his studies in Rovereto that Antonio's powers were highly appreciated ; indeed, expectations of his future greatness were openly expressed. He passed the examinations with extraordinary success, and received a special prize awarded by the unanimous consent of his masters, who obtained for him the singular distinction of election to the literary society of the *Agiati*, just then awakening to new and vigorous life. The Rev. G. B. Locatelli, the head master of the school, and the Rev. Carlo Tranquillini expressed their congratulations in words of highest praise. "This prize," they wrote, "is but a token of our joy and gratitude to the Giver of all good, who has sown the rich seed in your soul, now bringing forth fruit so great that your country may well expect a yet more abundant harvest. Your school-fellows will be urged on by your example, and will learn from it the great truth that the truly wise do not look on religion and learning as

hostile to each other, but view them as children of the same Father of lights, ever ready to embrace and sustain one another."

Antonio's fellow-students joined heartily in the encomiums lavished upon him, and far from envying him, composed an ode in his honour, predicting his future greatness in the following stanza :—

> " Through thee we trust will Italy regain
> The golden splendours of her ancient reign."

While the intellectual powers of the young student were making such rapid advances, and his love of the beautiful and the true daily increased, his love of good grew in proportion. From the very first, beauty and truth were valued by him only in reference to goodness, and the triple faculties of his soul were harmoniously developed throughout.

To do good to others was an imperative necessity with him, so strong was his desire for their welfare. In 1812 we find him gathering a little party of fellow-students in his house, each one bringing some composition to the meetings to be read or recited. The numbers soon increased, and before long he had formed quite a regular academy with systematic rules. The object of the society was stated to be mutual encouragement in the love of religion and sound learning, and a preparation for entrance into the Society of the *Agiati*. Love of study and a good Christian life were the only conditions for admission, no regard being paid to social position or brilliant talents. At the monthly meetings, each was expected to contribute some literary composition; and as to the small sum required for expenses, Antonio thoughtfully provided those who were in straitened circumstances with their little subscription beforehand, to avoid wounding their feelings. A council was appointed to adjust any differences that might arise, for no disagreement was to be permitted in a society of brothers and companions. They took the name of Vannettians from Clementino Vannetti, a writer much spoken of in Rovereto ;

and placed themselves under the patronage of St. Aloysius, that their title might remind them to cultivate pure Latin and Italian, and their patron saint lead them to exalt and ennoble their studies by a truly Christian spirit. The young founder was chosen president, and took the *nom-de-plume* of *Simonino Ironta*, the anagram of Antonio Rosmini, but as soon as everything was in working order he gave up his position to his cousin Leonardo, and chose the humbler duties of secretary for himself. The little society existed for several years; it consisted of about twenty youths, chiefly Roveretans, though there were a few outsiders, like Tevini and Sonn, students from the seminary, who after their ordination became professors in the schools of Trent and Rovereto. By this humble beginning Antonio Rosmini almost unconsciously initiated the apostolate of wisdom and charity which was to be his life's work.

Charity towards distant friends he exercised by his letters, which began to be numerous about this time. When they came to visit him, he would entertain them with the utmost cordiality, and leave his studies to spend his time in their society, always for the purpose of mutual encouragement in the love of learning and religion. The fatigue of long hours of study also had a charitable object in view, viz., the advancement of learning as well as religion, and he had already conceived the idea of a Rosminian press which might produce good books, well got up, at moderate price—a project which he always cherished as an exercise of charity and courtesy.

The soul of Antonio Rosmini was all on fire with the love of God, the Sovereign Good, and his ardent desire to be of service to all had no other source than this heavenly flame. His thoughts and affections were centred in God, to whom he humbly and gratefully gave back all that he had received. *Tua sunt omnia*, he wrote at the beginning of one of his works—*The Day of Solitude—et quæ de manu tua accepimus, reddimus tibi.* Like all souls that live by faith, he saw in the beauties of creation a mirror of

the Divine perfections, and the loving contemplation of nature raised his thoughts irresistibly to Him who is its source. At the age of sixteen he longed to compose a Sonnet of Praise to God, with nature as the source of his inspiration, and, not finding a metre worthy of his theme, he wished to invent one that might express adequately the loftiness of his conception. "A hymn is not enough," he wrote; "it requires a new canticle more sublime in its numbers; if I cannot succeed in producing this new measure by study and meditation, with God's grace, the subject must be treated in several sonnets, appropriately divided." This canticle of praise to the Creator, left unattempted for the time, was afterwards produced in prose works far more sublime than any poetry.

Still it was not in nature that Antonio saw the Divine greatness most clearly; he recognised in the Church of Christ the masterpiece of Infinite Wisdom and Power. He loved the Church with an intense ardour; he observed her laws conscientiously, delighted in her ceremonies and in the prayers of her Ritual, which he introduced in the *Day of Solitude:* above all, he venerated her authority. In his little book of *Thoughts*, penned in 1814, we read on the title-page the following passage, a beautiful profession of faith by the young author, and never falsified by him: "These thoughts," he writes, "are the work of a youth who has not yet studied philosophy, but has written what his reason has dictated as most beautiful and, to him, new. He wishes to state, however, that he is always subject to the Church, that is to say, to Truth, and ready at once to recall anything written in ignorance, that may not be approved by her."

Such ardent love of God and desire for the good of others aroused in him a great esteem for the priesthood, and a longing to embrace the state which would open the path to complete consecration of himself to the service of God and the good of mankind. Some signs or presages of this appear in the essay *In Praise of the Priesthood*, read at one of the

meetings in his house, and sent by him to his cousin Antonio Fedrigotti to impress the beauty of the sacerdotal state on the young aspirant to that dignity. In fact, it was not long before an interior voice told him that God called him to devote himself entirely to His service in the ecclesiastical state. Antonio then made his intentions known to his family; this was in 1814; he told them he had decided to enter the priesthood, and could no longer refuse to follow the Divine call.

The effect of the unexpected announcement was indescribable. Antonio was the elder of the two sons, healthy, distinguished, clever, and highly gifted; Giuseppe, although good, was a very different character, with uncertain health, so that the parents looked to the elder son for the fulfilment of their hopes. And now their expectations were all doomed to disappointment! They could not bring themselves to believe it; they persuaded themselves that the decision of their elder son must have been a sudden impulse, and that every effort must be made to change his determination. What was their astonishment to find Antonio, who had always been so attentive to their least wish, now firm as a rock! Upon this, they called in Father Cesari from Verona, a venerable and learned priest who would, they hoped, succeed where they had failed. He was accustomed to visit them every year when he came to Rovereto for a gathering of his literary friends, and on this occasion he undertook to reason with Antonio on the subject of his vocation. Far from persuading him to abandon it, however, the good priest found his arguments confronted with such clear and efficacious reasons, expressed with all deference and modesty by his young friend, that he felt sure a Divine call was in question, and could insist no longer. From an adversary, he became a warm advocate of young Rosmini's cause, and finally induced his parents to make the sacrifice God evidently required of them.

We will conclude this chapter by giving, as a proof of what has been said, an extract from a letter written by

Antonio to Bartolomeo Menotti in the September of 1814; it may be said to express the purpose of his life. "There is no wisdom here below except such as comes from the Father of lights. Rest assured, therefore, that literature has of itself no charm for me. I have made up my mind to become a priest and to give up all I have in order to buy a treasure which neither rust nor moth can consume, nor thieves break through and steal. I mean, with the help of God, to make use of such little learning as I possess, in the work of instructing others. Could there be a more beautiful task? My physical powers shall also be pressed into the service, and my worldly means employed in promoting science and relieving the poor. These resolutions are dictated, not by reason only, but by my heart." These words echo and confirm those given at the opening of this chapter; they are an epitome of his life. They not only contain the resolution to give himself to God, but prove that the sacrifice was already made; the studies, reflections, and labours of the philosopher, the austerities of the ascetic, the generous sacrifices of the private man, the citizen, the priest, all are contained in this consecration. If we consider the various and chequered incidents of his life in this light, we shall find them all to centre in one point and shine there with supernatural beauty, just as the many-coloured rays of light, brought to a common focus and fused in one, radiate from it again in greater intensity and beauty.

CHAPTER IV

YOUTH: PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES (1814–1816)

No facilities for higher studies existed at Rovereto, and those students who wished to go beyond the course provided at the public school had to repair to some other town or engage a master. Pier Rosmini chose the latter alternative in order to keep his son at home, and engaged the Rev. Pietro Orsi, a skilful mathematician rather than a philosopher, but one who was, as we have seen, devoted to Antonio. Several other Roveretan families decided to adopt the same course, so that, before long, twelve young men formed Orsi's class, and amongst the most promising were Antonio Fedrigotti, and Bartolomeo Stofella, a youth of less profound intellect than Antonio Rosmini, though of more lively disposition.

The classes were usually held at the house of Fedrigotti, but the Rev. Pietro Orsi frequently took his scholars out and taught them as they walked along the banks of the Adige, or sat in some shady nook, where the labour of hard study was relieved by the contemplation of the beauties of nature. His text-book of philosophy was by Karpe, an author more or less tainted by the errors of Locke, with which the master was also to some extent infected. Hence arose arguments between Rosmini and Orsi, earnest disputations, though with no tinge of harshness, which ended in the Rev. P. Orsi's completely changing his opinions, and finally becoming Rosmini's disciple. Even in mathematics and physics they were not always agreed, but Antonio contrived to combine reverence for the master with his love of truth by restraining himself at the class, and afterwards stating his opinions with modest frankness in writing.

In one of these letters he supplies a mathematical demonstration of the moon's rotation, and in another, corrects a formula of Gregorio Fontana on accelerated motion.

The Rev. P. Orsi was a man of large heart, free from envy, consequently he felt no annoyance at the arguments of his pupil, nor at their potency against his own ; he admired him for his talent and good feeling, and esteemed and loved him the more. Now and then, as a token of his confidence, he would ask him to go over the lessons with the class, or even call on him to explain some point, and he rejoiced to see the influence Antonio's words exercised over his fellow-students, as if it were a gain to himself. Rosmini, on his part, was not in the least elated at his success or the cogency of his arguments ; he saw in his victories only a ground for greater esteem and gratitude towards the master who contributed so much to the good result of his work. A little passage from his diary is an eloquent panegyric on Orsi : " My master's friendship was an immense encouragement ; he made one love virtue, and all that is beautiful and great, and most worthy of man."

After two years spent under the Rev. P. Orsi, he went to Trent in 1816 for the examination held at the Imperial Academy, where he not only passed with singular distinction, but was also characterised as a young man of remarkable culture and powerful intellect, *ornatissimus et acerrimo ingenio præditus adolescens*. During these two years, which he styles prolific in thoughts and projects, he continued his literary labours, worked at the Dictionary and the *Day of Solitude*, rendered several of Cicero's *Orations* into Italian, and wrote a few poems and sonnets ; though, as his mind began to take higher flights, he declared that literature seemed to him only the shell, or, at best, the veneer of the higher sciences. In the January of 1815 he took his place for the first time at the meetings of the *Agiati*, and read a poem : at first, some slight jealousy was apparent, but Antonio's modesty soon overcame this, and he was entrusted with a scientific treatise of Dr. Zallingher's,

to be abridged for the Academy. Neither did he neglect geography, history, and other minor studies, such as drawing and German; but he was so fascinated by mathematics, and still more by philosophy, that he felt sure he should never lose his relish for either of them, though he considered philosophy the highest and most fundamental of studies, the groundwork of all others. He read Locke and Condillac and prepared a refutation of their errors; he also read Lord Bacon, and wrote a *Classification of History* on his plan; Lucrezio Caro he read with feelings of sorrow at the sight of so much that is vile and coarse clad in finest cloth of gold. He had also learnt something of the German school from Karpe, Weber, and Reinhold. Although he held the greater writers in repute for their legacy of intellectual riches, and gathered every fragment of truth from amidst their errors, trying to discover even the distorted remnant of truth that might still remain, yet in none of the writers on philosophy did he find all that his mind craved for: he felt within him the power to soar into sublime heights, and with the ardour of youth he made the attempt. The fruit of these early speculations was a book *On Divisions*, followed by one on *Reason* and a somewhat lengthy oration on *The Necessity and Utility of Cultivating Reason*.

Those who seek something more than a mere statement of facts in the history of human genius, will like to know how our youthful philosopher grasped that supreme principle, which is the key to the great edifice he afterwards raised. In 1814, before his philosophical studies were begun, he had proposed to himself the great problem of the origin of ideas in his little book of *Thoughts*, and as if to urge himself to seek a solution he wrote: "This must be thought over and reflected upon." The following year, whilst he was thinking and reflecting, the light came in this way. He was walking along the *Via Terra* at Rovereto, alone and in deep reflection, passing from thought to thought, when he noticed that by taking away some of its

determinations from a determinate idea, it is changed into another and more universal idea; by taking away other determinations the idea gradually becomes more universal, until we reach the idea of being, universal and indeterminate, after which nothing can be withdrawn without destroying the very object of thought; whence he concluded that the idea of "being" is the parent idea, the supreme container, the necessary object of human thought. Going back over the same ground—that is to say, restoring one by one the determinations previously taken away—he saw the original ideas reappear, until he came back to the point from which he had started; whence he concluded that ideas, more or less general or particular, are but the *idea of being*, more or less determinate. This is his own account of the fact, communicated to Paoli, Pestalozza, and Strosio. The latter expressed astonishment that a boy of eighteen should have grasped such an exalted theory in so clear a manner. "I believe," replied Rosmini, "that it was a light from God." He hastened to add that he was not speaking of an extraordinary revelation, and that his mental development was in great measure due to the Rev. Pietro Orsi, who was much more learned in mathematics and philosophy than people supposed.

The consciousness of a special mission is strongly felt by those whom Providence has chosen for mighty works, and from this assurance they draw the inspiration, the courage, and the firm confidence which never abandons them even amidst obstacles, contradictions, and misfortunes. In Antonio, the feeling that he had a special work to accomplish grew daily more vivid until it became a conviction. In a letter to his cousin Leonardo, the playfellow of former days, he exclaims abruptly: "Oh! my dear friend, *Who knows? Who knows?* In one of my sonnets I have written these words, addressed to our Lord:

> "A shapeless block, disdain'd by workmen's hands,
> Was that same pillar, object of Thy choice,
> Which, smooth and bright, now in Thy temple stands.

God has chosen the unlearned in the eyes of the world to confound the learned; the most vile and despicable, nothingness itself, to destroy the great, so that none should glory in His sight. But where is my pen running to?" Here we see him looking into the future, and, as if he perceived his destiny, suddenly withdrawing his gaze in dismay. Writing to Sonn, he says, "Who knows what may be in the mind of God? Perhaps a voice from these mountains may make itself heard far beyond their limits." In later years he stated that, when he set down his first reflections on paper, he felt he was sowing the seeds of his life's work. It must not be inferred that the flame of piety enkindled in earliest childhood was losing anything of its ardour in the midst of severe study, often prolonged into the night. Many and varied as were the thoughts of Antonio Rosmini, they had but one object and centre, the desire to glorify God and to do good to others for His sake. "All my occupations," he wrote to Tevini, "tend to the same end. Oh, how I desire to increase, as far as in me lies, the glory of the Divine name!" And to Orsi he says, "If I could but succeed in one thing, to please God by my labours and to walk in His sight hopefully and tranquilly! Could I but help my brethren in any way, what a happy lot were mine! My heart burns with ardour at the thought; it sweetens all my labour, and I count fatigue as nothing; but without it the most beautiful and sublime principles of art and science would seem burdensome, insipid, and distasteful to me." Hence he loved science for the sake of religion, and had no relish for anything that was not seasoned by the love of God and directed to the sublime end he had proposed to himself. "One drop of moral goodness," he said, "is more to me than a whole sea of human knowledge." Words the more noteworthy since he once declared the love of knowledge to be his only passion. Human glory was to him only an object of contempt. "Be assured," he wrote to Lorenzi, who had urged him to study for the sake of fame, "be assured that for me, love of fame is too

feeble a spur; my end it could never be. The glory of God, gratitude, the desire to improve myself and my fellow-men and to fulfil my duty, these are the objects, the powerful motives, which urge and impel me to do my utmost." He was not satisfied with the virtual intention of pleasing God, but knowing that the flame of charity is intensified by exercise, he sought to render the union of his mind with God more and more actual by devoting several hours of the day to duties of Christian piety. And beyond these hours of devotion, it was always his custom to seek comfort and strength from God in prayer, in every affliction or pressing necessity. When engaged in prayer the holy ardour of his soul was manifest in the radiance of his countenance, which gave to his whole person a superhuman beauty and majesty, most delightful and edifying to the beholders. Many years after his death, those who had known young Rosmini would still recall his devout attitude in prayer, a pleasing and consoling recollection, like the sweet-scented breeze that comes to us from a loved and distant land. His zeal for souls was fed from the same heavenly source. Not being able to reach all mankind as he would have wished, he concentrated his attention for the time on his nearest neighbours, as the right order of charity requires. He was assiduous in the care of his brother Giuseppe, and strove to instil into him a love of study and virtue, so that he might grow up "moulded to Christian piety." To his friend Demetrio Leonardi, when studying at Padua, he sent wise counsel as to his conduct in a large town. To another friend, who was inclined to take a gloomy view of things, he wrote words full of encouragement: "Raise your mind above this world and soar up to heaven; unite yourself closely to God, and men will appear insignificant in your sight; and since all that comes from God is perfect, strive to conform yourself in all things to the Divine Will." His correspondence, ever on the increase, was no mere pastime or recreation, but a multiform work of charity. It is extremely inte-

resting to note his ingenuity in rousing his friends to intellectual exertions: he would propose subjects to them for discussion and questions to be solved, setting them on the way to success and encouraging them to try. Still more beautiful is it to see how he entered into their sorrows, their hopes, their joys, always liberal with friendly counsel or help according to their need. His native place was the object of his thoughts and deep affection; he planned schemes for the improvement of the public school and academy, and endeavoured to enlist the most gifted of his friends in a projected printing press to supply a good students' library, while he also endeavoured to secure able masters. If his designs were not always successfully carried out, the fault was not his, and credit must be given to him for these ideas and the efforts he made to realise them. It must not be supposed that the desire to benefit his friends and fellow-citizens was any barrier to a wider exercise of charity: he gladly accepted every opportunity sent him by Providence of doing good, and all the more readily, the wider its sphere of utility. Thus he directed his studies, even from these early days, to the restoration of philosophy, and through it of the other sciences; and this restoration of the sciences he directed to a higher object, the restoration of civil and Christian society. For this end he encouraged study by all the means in his power. By his letters he urged Sonn to complete his work on *Education* and Tevini to write a treatise on the education of Church students, entered into subtle questions on physical science with Stofella, expressed his pleasure at Leonardi's success in chemistry and botany, and recommended him to devote his energies to those subjects. Antonio Rosmini would appear to some to have been too sanguine in his expectations from men whose talents were not of a high order; and, no doubt, his benevolent nature led him to judge very favourably of the gifts and mental endowments of others; but we are inclined to think that this tendency arose from a conviction that great enterprises, whether in

the physical, intellectual, or moral order, owe their success to the efforts of earnest men endowed with moderate abilities, as well as to the labours of men of genius.

What has been said of this period of Rosmini's life may perhaps create an impression that his youth, cheered by study, by the joys of friendship and domestic affection, presented a flowery path where thorns were unknown. It would be a mistake, however, to think that his life was free from those thorns of affliction which help to mature virtue. One trial to him was the want of those aids which the vastness of his designs and his extensive studies required, and which a little country town could not provide. "I assure you," he writes to Fedrigotti, "our life is mean and obscure to the last degree; here we are shut in amongst these mountains, so cut off from the rest of mankind that we know scarcely anything of the good and beautiful works done by others, nor can we enjoy the benefit of them." Sad words these, like those said to Tommaseo later on: "I am here as if under a tent." His parents were devoted to him, but they did not fully grasp his needs, and it was trying to him to find that those he loved best did not altogether understand his wants, though they helped him to a certain extent. In a letter written to his uncle Ambrogio, on his departure from Rovereto in 1816, he recommends himself to his generosity, and says that he might have been a mendicant friar from his youth, he was so often in want of necessaries, but that he had succeeded in bearing it patiently, through love of poverty, and especially of evangelical poverty. Other and more distressing trials came upon him in this year. "An interior trial," he wrote to Sonn in February, "has brought me to such straits that I can scarcely bear it; and if God ever-Blessed does not assist me, I may even succumb to it." In April he writes, "Taken up with a thousand different thoughts and occupations, I accomplish but little; affliction weighs down my spirit, but I willingly bear all for the love of God and in penance for my sins." In May he

writes: "Interior trials are the chief cross I have to carry, and I will acknowledge to you that, amidst so many blessings from God, my life is still full of sorrow. But God has always been, and is, my strength; I abandon myself to Him, I call upon Him, and He never fails to answer and console me." Here we see more than resignation: it is brave Christian fortitude lifting him above himself to cast himself with loving confidence into the arms of God; but at the same time his words betray the depths of the grief which he cannot unburden, even to his dearest friends. There is reason to suppose that the cause of this distress was a new attempt to turn him from his vocation to the priesthood; and, doubtless, his delicate consideration and reverence for his parents prevented him from mentioning this fact, as he had concealed their first opposition.

However this may be, Antonio succeeded in obtaining his father's consent to attend a course of theology at Padua at the opening of the scholastic year. Pier Modesto had taken some steps towards sending him to the Roman *Accademia Ecclesiastica*, since his high birth and rare talents would there be certain to win honour and distinction for his family. Such inducements had no weight with the son; he was not dazzled by the prospect of gain or preferment, but earnestly begged his father to let him go to Padua with his cousin Fedrigotti, who was then preparing for the priesthood, and he at last obtained the desired permission. Every one will admire the disinterestedness shown by Antonio in this circumstance, but there is something still more worthy of admiration in this resolve. What emotions must have stirred the soul of such an ardent lover of all things beautiful and good, when he thought of Rome, the seat and temple of art, science, and religion! How often had he longed and desired to see the wonders of the Eternal City, described to him by his uncle Ambrogio with an artist's enthusiasm! And now the way was open to him at last! He might satisfy these holy longings and accomplish his desires, but he refuses in order to accompany

the friend who will, he hopes, be his associate in the priesthood. He speaks simply of "pleasing his friend," but the choice was an act of abnegation, due to generous and magnanimous charity; it might be termed heroic.

Before we pass on to our young student's life at the University of Padua, let us glance once more at his life up to the age of twenty—the childhood and boyhood which we leave with regret. Those years have often been styled the springtide of life; and such they were in every sense to Antonio Rosmini—a spring without frost, ice, or gloom, advancing with even, tranquil, and unerring steps. Thanks to the blessing of God, the watchful care of his parents, and his firmness of will, he escaped the misfortune so common to the young, of being led astray by error, doubt, or the revolt of passion, and of having to retrace his steps in order to regain the right path. He had no evil to undo, nor had he to labour to make up for lost time; his progress in the path of goodness had been steady, without delay, halting, or turning back. Faith and reason grew and throve vigorously side by side in his soul, like two plants cultivated by the same hand, caressed by the same gentle breeze, favoured by the same sky, or rather, like two plants grafted one upon the other, nourished with the same sap from the same root and soil. No shadow of doubt ever darkened his lively faith, nor was his mind ever disturbed by stormy passions. His affections, nurtured by strong faith, grew in manly vigour, and increased in their turn the power of his mind, and as a consequence, all his actions bear the impress of his vigour of thought and affection. The harmony of his faculties and their mutual assistance gave a fulness and power to the intellectual and moral life of Antonio Rosmini from his earliest years, and imparted to his character a unity and simplicity which become more and more striking in the course of our biography.

In early life Antonio enjoyed perfect health, which the strict rein he kept over his inferior nature served to maintain. After he had arrived at manhood he was often

heard to say that the overflowing joy of youthful vigour had often made him realise in some degree the fulness of life enjoyed by our first parents in Paradise.

He was rather over the middle height, slender and well-proportioned, except that his head was rather large. His massive brow was shaded by an abundance of chestnut hair; he had an aquiline nose, somewhat projecting chin, and large, thoughtful eyes, which sparkled with pleasure at sight of any ray of the good, the beautiful, or the true. A sweet and affectionate smile constantly played round his finely-chiselled lips, from which no malignant word was ever heard to fall. In manner, he was exceedingly gracious and winning; his attire and whole appearance were characterised by a simple and modest dignity. When he spoke of or to God, there was a radiance of grace and supernatural beauty about him which awoke in the listener feelings of love and veneration.

Such was Antonio Rosmini at the age of twenty, but his soul lost none of its youthful vigour in the course of years; it was not weakened by the labours, the grief, or the anguish of mind which he had to endure; and his countenance always retained the same sweet expression of peace and benignity, even on his bed of death.

CHAPTER V

YOUTH: THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (1816–1819)

On the 20th of November 1816 Antonio Rosmini, not without regret, left the home of his childhood to reside at Padua. The reader may easily imagine what thoughts would fill his mind on first entering the ancient city, so rich in memories both sacred and profane, but it is interesting to note that some centuries earlier two great men, whom he resembled in character as well as in mental gifts, had also repaired to the same university—St. Francis of Sales and Galileo Galilei. Our young student entered the university, partly conscious of the mission allotted to him by Providence, and, to some extent, prepared to carry it out. His literary education had suffered by the disadvantages of his surroundings at Rovereto, and the deficiencies of his early masters have left traces even on his later works, but there was a gain in the matter of scientific education. Great teachers, endowed with the authority of talent and repute, are apt to communicate their own way of thinking to their pupils, and impress their own personality on them so strongly as to arrest the spontaneous development of their faculties, and deprive them of all originality. Antonio Rosmini, who was far above his masters in mental endowments, had already fixed for himself the chief principles of philosophy before he left his native town; so that the new and broader studies of the university, while they gave him the opportunity of studying the views of others and comparing them with his own, did but strengthen the views he had previously formed. During the three years he spent at Padua, he resided with his fellow-students, Leonardo Rosmini and Antonio Fedrigotti, near the Church of St.

Anthony. Stofella, whom he had brought on account of his rare promise, was also of the party. At first they took their meals at the boarding-house, but, after a time, decided to try and economise, for the sake of their studies, by doing their own cooking. It must have been an amusing sight to see these young men, nearly all of noble birth, attired as cooks, preparing their frugal meals with the greatest zest.

Antonio, like a good son, would send his father minute details of his expenditure every month, and ask for the necessary remittance with which to go on. The allowance was so scanty, however, that he was often obliged to have recourse to his mother, who supplied him privately with a very welcome addition to his income.

We may say that he had described beforehand his life at Padua in the advice given to Demetrio Leonardi a year earlier, in which he recommends him to form a little world for himself, to avoid the society of idle companions, to be courteous and affable with all, but not to make friends too easily, to love occupation and work, to live a retired life as far as possible, and continually to call for help on Him who forms His Saints. Following these principles, Antonio allotted his day to prayer, study, and intercourse with his friends: this was the tenor of his life during the next two years.

To speak first of prayer, in which he said that he poured forth his soul to God, and found strength of mind and peace of spirit. He heard Mass every day at St. Anthony's Church, besides spending much time in private prayer in the solitude of his chamber, and reading daily a portion of the Holy Scriptures.[1] In the evening some spiritual book was read aloud, and the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin was recited with his friends; indeed, one may say that his habitual intention of seeking God alone in all things

[1] There is a note in the Latin Bible which he used: "To-day, Nov. 9, 1820, I have begun to read this sacred volume through for the third time at least."

rendered every action a prayer. As for his studies, he found himself at first somewhat embarrassed by the theological lectures, four a day, with their "grave and magisterial air." They hindered the prosecution of his own designs, and forced him to keep pent up the ideas with which his mind was overflowing; but no sooner was he at liberty than he gave himself with all his former ardour to literature, philosophy and mathematics. Thanks to the facilities afforded by the university, he was able to enlarge his field of knowledge, and learn something of the science of agriculture, and of chemistry, physiology, and medicine. To pursue these studies satisfactorily, he required books, which he styled "the implements of his profession," or, better still, "the storehouses of wisdom"; hence his earnest endeavours to secure them. It is interesting to remark the victory gained by the love of knowledge over his natural bashfulness, and how he would plead for the sum required, at one time from his father, at another from his mother or his uncle, in letters so persuasive that they evidently expressed the feelings of his heart. In course of time he succeeded in this way in adding many valuable works to his father's library.

Part of his day was given up to his friends. The city of Padua in those days could boast of many citizens whom young students could admire and love; and Antonio soon poured out on these new friends the sincere regard and affection which had had so little scope in Rovereto. A few months after his arrival, he wrote to his brother that "friendship smiled pleasantly upon him under the sky of Padua as well." Friendships tempered by reverence were formed with his masters Tommasoni, Zandonella, Assemani, and Cappellari, as well as with Professors Baldinotti, Zabeo, Meneghelli, Mabil, Melan, Furlanetto, and other professors belonging to the university or the seminary. These friendships were founded on mutual esteem, for, whilst Antonio Rosmini, prompted by his naturally retiring and modest disposition, looked up to them on account of his

youth and his being but a student, they admired his rare gifts of mind, his knowledge, and his singular virtue. Ties of a more affectionate kind bound him to his fellow-students —De Apollonia, a priest, Giovanni Stefani, a cleric from Valle Vestina, Alessandro Paravia, a Dalmatian, and Uzielli, a native of Leghorn. With these friends he was quite at his ease, for he disliked affectation and formality, which hamper real affection; he devoted to them a considerable portion of the time he valued so highly, and sometimes their conversations and discussions, especially on philosophy, would be continued until late at night. These lively, but not contentious disputations were a wholesome discipline for speech and thought, whether they served to deepen his own principles, or provided him with an opportunity of explaining, moderating, or enlarging them, and of extending his mental horizon.

He soon joined a literary society, composed of about forty students, who were accustomed to meet now and then and recite or read themes in prose or verse; it was at one of these reunions that Antonio by request produced his panegyric of St. Philip Neri, the model and patron of the society. It was published later on. He learnt from this to love the Florentine saint, and it was a love based on many points of resemblance between St. Philip and himself; there was the same delicacy of feeling, the same pure love for his friends, together with love of propriety, literary ardour, and cheerfulness of disposition—though not shown in the same odd ways; and, above all, the same ardent charity.

In June 1818, he gained the degree of Bachelor in Theology with full votes, and left what he called "the royal prison of the city" and fled—

> "To outstretched arms, sweet, gay faces,
> Tender parents, wise friends beloved,
> And the pure, fresh air of home."

In this first vacation he wrote to De Apollonia a letter in

verse describing in the most simple and touching manner the delights of his home life.

Up to this time Antonio had not worn clerical attire, though he longed to enter the sanctuary and assume its livery. His desire found vent in the words of David, which he quoted to a friend: "One thing have I asked of the Lord, this will I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." [1] Having obtained from the authorities at Trent the necessary permission to don the clerical habit, he asked his parents' consent out of deference to them, and writing to a friend some years later he informed him that his pious mother had said on this occasion, "Do the Will of God; I should never venture to oppose that."

He returned to Padua on the 6th of November, and on the next day assumed the ecclesiastical dress with great joy. He wrote to tell the news that same day to Antonio Fedrigotti, who was to have been his companion in this ceremony, but had given up theology and gone to pursue other studies at Innsbruck. "To-day," he wrote, "I have donned the clerical dress for the first time. May God, who has called me to serve in His holy tabernacle, grant me a pure heart, elevation of mind, and an energetic spirit, that I may not fall short in so holy an office! Since this burden has been put on me I have not ceased to pray to that effect, and I beg you to add your prayers to mine. I frequently recommend you to our Lord, praying that we may still walk together in His presence towards the same goal, if by diverse paths."

Here the life of Antonio Rosmini as a layman comes to a close, and as we glance over it, we perceive that it was ruled by two great attractions, the love of knowledge and the love of virtue. These two affections did not divide his soul: the pursuit of knowledge for God's sake only increased his ardour for virtue, while the practice of virtue for the love of God imparted new light to his mind.

[1] Ps. xxvi. 4.

The second year of his residence at Padua was in many respects similar to the first, but he had a great deal to suffer from one who was very dear to him, a circumstance which has not hitherto been mentioned by any of Rosmini's biographers, but which we think it right to withhold no longer. His younger brother Giuseppe had, up to the age of seventeen, been a frank and high-spirited boy; his morals were irreproachable, as indeed they always continued to be, but about this time his disposition began to take an unhappy turn. Under the pressure of ailing health he became a victim to weariness, disgust for study, and a kind of hypochondria which was a life-long trial. His parents tried in vain to remedy the evil, and ultimately decided on sending him to Padua to be with Antonio. The latter welcomed him with the utmost affection, longing to help him; but soon perceived that the case was beyond human aid. "I will do my best," he wrote to his father, "but my hope is in God alone; if we succeed in changing him, it will be nothing short of a miracle." Giuseppe lived by the impulse of the moment; one day he was bent on riding, the next on playing the violin. One day he would rise very early, the next he was in bed long after sunrise, and he would do little or no study. Antonio tried by every means to influence him; he entreated, advised, exhorted, lovingly reproved him, and used every effort that affection could suggest to a loving brother, but all in vain. He was neither discouraged nor vexed, however, at seeing his labour thrown away; when one plan failed he tried another, and made his ill-success an opportunity of self-humiliation. "When I reflect on these trials sent me by God," he writes to his father, "I see a Divine plan to draw me to Himself and effect my conversion. How wonderful is the wisdom of God, who makes use of the greatest evils for our sanctification!" The pain Antonio endured during the five months of his brother's stay is known only to God, for he allowed none but his parents to suspect the state of affairs, and thus felt his burden all the more keenly.

The Divine goodness, however, taught him in this school of sorrows to bear disappointment with manly fortitude, and prepared him for greater sorrows to come.

On the 15th of May of this year 1818, he received the tonsure at the hands of Mgr. Dondi, Bishop of Padua, and minor orders on the day following. Two days previously he announced the event to his cousin Fedrigotti in these humble words: "I am testing my vocation, and God in His infinite goodness confirms me more and more in my resolution. Indeed, I may now tell you that on Sunday next the Bishop of Padua will confer the minor orders on me. Do pray for me, that, having entered the sheep-fold by the door, I may become a true pastor and not a vile hireling."

On the 20th of July, the examinations over, he went home with his brother, hoping to find relief from anxiety rather than from labour; but there another sorrow awaited him. Whilst he was away on a little excursion to the *Valle delle Giudicarie* with some friends, his aged uncle Ambrogio passed away. The sad news was broken to him very cautiously on his return; Antonio, who loved his uncle as a father, raised his eyes to heaven in perfect submission to the Divine Will. In the sad event itself he recognised the goodness of God, who had spared him the pain of being present at his uncle's death, and enabled him to bear it so bravely that he did not shed a tear.

On the 6th of November he set out a third time for Padua. He was now alone with Stofella, his cousin Leonardo having graduated for the law, but his place was soon filled by a new friend, Nicolò Tommaseo from Sebenico in Dalmatia. Although he had been a fellow-student of Antonio's in the course of Canon Law, they had not become acquainted, but an opportunity presented itself on a certain occasion when the young Dalmatian recited a Latin composition. Rosmini, a good judge of elegant Latin, though not, perhaps, very proficient himself, was much struck with the verses, admired the purity of diction and

elevation of mind displayed in them, and resolved to make the acquaintance of the author with a view to closer friendship. He was successful, and this was the beginning of his more than brotherly solicitude for Nicolò Tommaseo, not only with regard to his mental and spiritual welfare, but also for his temporal well-being. This new friend occupied a miserable room, dull and comfortless, which Antonio feared would be injurious to him in his delicate state of health, and he begged him to take a better one, even offering to exchange rooms with him as they were in the same house. Nicolò's intellectual progress was a still greater object of his care. Anxious to counteract an attraction for Ovid, he tried to enlist the young poet's sympathies for Virgil, a more finished scholar and a nobler mind. He also endeavoured to get him to write some important work, such as the *Chronicles of Christianity*. He assisted him to understand and appreciate more fully the beauties of the Italian language; then by degrees he led him on to love philosophy, to venerate the Fathers of Christian philosophy, to see the connection between the arts and sciences, and between one science and another.

But the spiritual interests of his friend occupied Antonio Rosmini even more intensely. In Nicolò he perceived the germs of virtue striving, like tiny plants, to force their way through ground still overgrown with thorns, and he affectionately set himself to cultivate them with hope not unmingled with fear. His efforts were not appreciated at the time by the object of his solicitude, who certainly did not as yet love his benefactor; his intellectual views appeared to Tommaseo too high and his virtue too austere. With St. Augustine, Tommaseo exclaimed, *Horrori mihi erat ingenium illud*, and although a certain religious feeling made him venerate the young cleric, yet in some cases he would treat him with childish disrespect. Rosmini, with all the patience love inspires, endured the whims, eccentricities, and rudeness of his friend, now passing them over, now correcting them with gentle words or prudent silence.

awaiting from God in course of time the result of his labours. Later on, Tommaseo did make noble amends for what he termed "the errors of youth and the faults of youthful impetuosity," courageously and humbly acknowledging them, and doing full justice to the goodness of his friend.

Two events which occurred in this same year were a source of holy joy to Rosmini. The first was the discovery of the body of St. Francis of Assisi. The name of Francis was one of those he had received in baptism, and he had a singular affection for the holy mendicant friar, so that he rejoiced at the finding of the precious remains, an event which would probably help to rekindle the fire of charity where worldly ambition had almost extinguished it. The other event was the visit paid to Rome by the Emperor Francis I. of Austria, who passed through Padua on his way. It was not the brilliant display that touched the heart of our young cleric, but the hope that differences between Church and State would be amicably settled on this occasion, and the Church recover some of the freedom she had lost under the Emperor Joseph. Unfortunately it ended in little more than idle show. "I long to see everything amicably settled," he wrote to his father; "indeed, I hope God will grant this in answer to the prayers of His Saints."

Towards the middle of July, after completing his theological course, he returned home for the third time. He should have taken the order of subdeacon and the doctor's cap, but received neither. The diocese of Trent, to which he belonged, was at this time without a bishop, and from some cause or other his family had not provided the patrimony required for his ordination—two hindrances which caused a long delay. The doctor's degree he did not wish to take, either because his fellow-students were to graduate only the following year, or perhaps because he wished to receive the subdiaconate first out of reverence for the sacred order. He therefore returned home, where all were overjoyed to see him, matured and endowed with new

treasures of knowledge, but still distinguished by the same sterling qualities, holy modesty, and ardent piety which had characterised his childhood and youth.

In order that our readers may have some idea of his mental activity during these three years, I will give a rapid survey of the works begun or completed during that period. In 1817 he began a work on the *Classification of the Sciences* and planned a *Philosophical History of Poetry*, besides writing a sketch on *Literary Style* and a letter in verse to De Apollonia. In 1818 he compiled additional notes for the *Dictionary of Eminent Men* printed at Bassano in 1796, a *Gallery of Characters*, and a book arranged to contain his rule of life and the order of his studies. In 1819 he wrote a letter in verse to Tommaseo, and one in prose to Paravia on the *Reasons why Few People now Use the Italian Language Correctly;* he began a *Philosophical Library*, and translated St. Augustine's *On Catechising the Ignorant*. He further undertook to write a *History of the Human Race*, and traced the outline of this great work, which was to comprise: first, *A Defence of Religion, founded on the Books of Moses;* secondly, *The History of the First Education of Mankind;* thirdly, *The First Part of the History of Philosophy;* fourthly, *Some Conjectures regarding the Future History of Man*. This vast design was suggested to him by the *Enciclopedia Metodica*, a vast monument of human knowledge, which was being used as a weapon against Christ. Uzielli having lent him the work, he conceived the idea of opposing to it a *Christian Encyclopedia;* he arranged its various parts and invited the co-operation of his friends, choosing the most arduous portion of the work for himself. If his gigantic task was never completed in one sense, it was realised in another, for Rosmini's works are an encyclopedia in themselves. Still the principal parts were finished, and the outline of the others remains, to be filled in some day, when it pleases God, by a skilful hand.

Before continuing our narrative, we must pause awhile

to consider the noblest trait of Rosmini's character, his love of good—a love which governed his whole being. Glowing with love for the Infinite Good, he could not fail to love it even in its reflected splendours; hence his love for all men, and the ardent longing to do them good. He wrote to his brother, urging him to exercise charity. "Nothing gives me greater delight than to love my friends, and, indeed, all my fellow-men. Nothing, I may even say, is more pleasing to me than bearing with their defects, because I rejoice to know that by doing so I am fulfilling the law of God." In his dependent position, kept on a somewhat short allowance by his father, he could bestow little in alms; still, he contrived to help many a poor or struggling fellow-student by providing him with books or money, and always with such delicacy and tact that none could feel it a humiliation to accept his aid. Of his intellectual wealth he was prodigal; it was his own property, and he disposed of it with generous liberality. He expressed his ideas freely, never caring whether others appropriated them; he was not disturbed by contradiction, nor elated by the approval of others; his only desire was to see truth victorious. His earnest wish to benefit, not only his neighbours, but the whole human race, was his motive in undertaking the Encyclopedia above-mentioned, which would tend to lift up science and once more hallow and Christianise it. Although the wide extent of his charity embraced all men, yet by preference he turned first towards his native land, striving to promote there the interests of literature and of the fine arts and social reform. It was through his wise efforts that the Accademia of Rovereto was encouraged to pursue higher studies; through the friends he introduced from other places it attained new vigour, and he also succeeded in settling some differences among the members. With his assistance an orphanage was founded by his sister Margherita, and he thought of establishing a house for priests who should live together. He writes of this latter work as if already begun: "How

beautiful to see union in study and union in prayer, joined with unity of hearts! What more could one desire? If Christ be amongst us and we are united in Christ, what shall we not accomplish?"

It was not surprising that such an ardent charity should enkindle the flame in the souls of others. "When I think of you," wrote Paravia to him about a year later, "when I think of you, I can think only of what is good." If the thought of him at a distance was such an incentive to virtue, what a power must not his words and example have exercised over those who lived with him? Ten years later, Cappellari, then Bishop of Piacenza, spoke of his old pupil in words of noble appreciation: "He was a saint; even when he joined my class at the university, he was a saint." And a saint is one consumed with a burning zeal for all that is good.

CHAPTER VI

PREPARATION FOR THE PRIESTHOOD (1819–1821)

BETWEEN Antonio Rosmini's return from Padua and his ordination to the priesthood fully two years elapsed; years of earnest preparation for his elevation to that sublime dignity.

In November 1819, the diocese of Trent being still without a bishop, he went to Bressannone and received the subdiaconate at the hands of Mgr. Carlo Francesco Lodron on the 21st of that month, thus sealing and rendering irrevocable his consecration to God. On his return home, he began at once a life of piety and good works, which he described to a friend in the pithy sentence, "I go to Mass, and live a hermit's life"; as if he would say, "I think of God and live in solitude." The sacred order he had received helped him, as it were, by a sweet constraint to think of God, for the order of subdeacon brought with it the obligation of reciting the Divine Office, and any one who has read his beautiful pages on this subject in his *Christian Education* [1] will readily understand that it was a fruitful and delicious nourishment to his mind and heart. The very studies in which he was engaged kept his thoughts on God, because his aim was to feed devotion and strengthen Christian piety rather than to increase knowledge. In fact he laid aside profane studies almost entirely, and wrote more than thirty discourses on religious subjects, besides putting the finishing touches to his discourse on St. Philip Neri and to the translation of St. Augustine's work *On Catechising the Ignorant*.[2] He also wrote *Christian Educa-*

[1] *Della Educazione Cristiana*, published by Battagia, Venice, 1823; Forzani, Rome, 1900.

[2] *Modo di Catechizzare gli Idioti*, published at Rovereto, 1821; Pogliani, Milan, 1843.

tion and the *History of Love*, which were not published until some years later.

We must not omit to mention some works of charity which, together with prayer and study, at this time occupied him. One of these was a *Society of Friends*, intended by him to defend religion and to promote the interests of the Church of God. A wise instinct had always inclined Antonio Rosmini from childhood to associate others with himself for the purpose of doing solid and lasting good; and this tendency, first shown in his Accademia Vanettiana, reappears in the *Society of Friends*. As soon as he had framed rules suitable to his plan, he made them known to a few faithful friends; cautiously, however, at first, on account of the extreme suspicion with which the Government regarded any private meetings. The two members who first joined him were Stofella and De Apollonia, who, on the 27th of September 1819, signed a certain bond which was to unite them in the closest manner. The compact being made, Antonio turned to his friends and said, "My dear companions, we are much concerned about others, but what about ourselves?" This remark seemed rather to damp the ardour of his two associates, but the thought was not discouraging to him; he had always considered it necessary to conquer and reform oneself in order to succeed in overcoming external obstacles, and in reforming other people. He was soon joined by Stefani, and Brunati, a young deacon from Brescia. Paravia seems also to have become an associate, with several others from Friuli, and though the society was not so successful as might have been expected, we shall see later on that it did good work.

Another work of charity, not sought after, but put into his hands by Providence, was the literary and scientific training of some clerics in the neighbourhood, who had requested his assistance. They assembled at his house every day for a class of philosophy, every evening for theological conferences on the *Summa* of St. Thomas, and once a week for a lesson in sacred eloquence. He even

undertook the irksome task of translating the *Summa* into Italian for their convenience, and his translation of a number of the "Questions" is still in existence. It is a remarkable fact that while the study of St. Thomas was generally neglected in the Italian schools, a cleric at Rovereto should have begun to revive it amongst the younger clergy of the neighbourhood.

The January of 1820 brought mourning to the Rosmini family. Pier Modesto, still hale and hearty though in his seventy-fifth year, was suddenly taken ill, and died after a few days' illness. Fortified with the last Sacraments, perfectly resigned and patient in his sufferings, he gave up his soul into the hands of God on the 21st of January. He was lamented by his family and the poor, to whom he was a benefactor during life and at his death. The grief felt by Antonio at the loss of his father was increased by the responsibility which now devolved on him as head of the family. "You do not know," he wrote to Paravia, "what a burden has fallen upon my shoulders. Pray, pray for him, and also for me; for, if he is dead, I scarcely seem to survive." Pier Modesto had made his eldest son his heir, leaving him four-sixths of his property (valued at 600,000 florins) and one-sixth each to Giuseppe and Margherita. Giuseppe, the younger brother, being a somewhat eccentric invalid, this was quite natural; but to him it was a grievous disappointment, and became a pretext for causing endless annoyance and vexation to Antonio. It will be enough to state here that the latter, to appease his brother's anger, at once begged him to remain at home free of expense, on condition that he would superintend the house and gardens, but requested that no important change should be made without his own consent. When these troublesome details were arranged, Antonio once more resumed his life of peaceful preparation for the diaconate, which he received from Mgr. Manfrin Provedi, Bishop of Chioggia, who had come to consecrate the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel at Rovereto.

Let us return to the works of charity undertaken during these years of retirement. One of them was the assistance given to his sister in the foundation of an orphanage at Rovereto, which was mentioned in the previous chapter. A priest named Andrea Vannetti had left a sum of money for this much-needed work of charity; but for want of sufficient funds nothing had been done until some persons of position invited Margherita Rosmini to take the matter up. The young girl, who was remarkable for her talent as well as for her goodness, and resembled her brother in many ways, looked upon this call of charity as the voice of God, and courageously set to work. As in all good undertakings, difficulties were not wanting, but with the assistance of Antonio she overcame them all. The death of her father caused some delay, but enabled things to be placed on a better footing; for her brother took her to the Marchesa Maddalena Canossa, foundress of the Daughters of Charity at Verona, with whom she stayed a month, and then accompanied her to Venice. This visit gave her the benefit of her saintly friend's advice and experience, and was most advantageous. On her return, she arranged everything, and the institution was opened to some poor children on the 1st of September, amid great rejoicing and congratulations. Stofella, Paravia, Tommaseo, and others addressed the pious foundress in verses commemorative of the event, whilst Antonio dedicated to her his golden treatise on *Christian Education*, a work which deserves more than a passing notice. It is divided into three parts. The first, *On the Formation of a Wise Educator*, consists of instructions calculated to form the teacher for her sacred office; the second and third parts set forth the doctrines which should be explained to the children, and the virtues they should be taught to practise. It would be difficult to sum up the many excellent features of this little work, which under its simplicity of style displays at every step the profound thinker and the shrewd observer of human nature. It is redolent of love for Christ and His Holy

Church. The author felt very keenly the indifference displayed by modern Christians who follow Christ only from afar; his desire was that they should look upon our Lord as intimately present to each of us, as did the early Christians in those first ages of the Church, to which he constantly refers in his description of a truly Christian life. Loving Christ, he could not fail to love the Church, which is the fulness of the mystical body of Christ; hence sprang his love for those grand Catholic devotions which by their antiquity, dignity, and solidity surpass all private devotions, and lead to the knowledge and direct contemplation of Christ Himself. Manzoni, on reading this little work before he knew the author, declared that it was written according to the spirit of the early Fathers, and carried the mind back to the first ages of the Church.

Another remarkable work written by Rosmini about this time was the *History of Love*,[1] composed for his own private use rather than for the public; he only published it fourteen years later; and it has since passed through many editions, both in Italian and French. The author traces rapidly the history of love amongst men as related in the Old Testament. "Our love of one another is born of God," he says; "Eden was its native soil and innocence its twin sister." When innocence was lost, passion took the place of love, and jealousy was both the sign and the effect of the change. The false love which had been substituted for true love was not able to sanctify men, but God, by the promise of a Redeemer, rekindled true love in the human race. Hence the two cities of the just and the wicked—of God and of the evil one—between which a perpetual war was declared and is being carried on throughout the ages. Hence the anxiety of the Patriarchs to preserve from contact with other nations the chosen people of God, the figure of Christ's Church on earth, which is the guardian of heavenly charity.

Although the writer confines himself to the Old Testa-

[1] *Storia dell' Amore*, published in the *Ascetica;* Pogliani, Milan, 1840.

ment, he necessarily introduces the New Testament from time to time when comparing the figure with the reality. Moses, Job, and the other Patriarchs are treated of with a master hand as types and figures of the charity of Christ. To us this work is an evidence of his holiness even more than of his learning, for only a soul inflamed with the love of God, accustomed to meditate on the Holy Scriptures and to contemplate Divine things, could write thus on charity.

Towards the end of September, Rosmini quitted his retirement to go with Stofella to Friuli, where De Apollonia was anxiously awaiting him. He was moved to do so, not by a desire of seeing new sights or of gratifying his affectionate friends, but by the hope of giving stability to the association which he had initiated with them the previous year at Rovereto. He made the acquaintance of several worthy priests during his stay, some of them Oratorians, others professors in the seminary, and induced them all to co-operate in labouring for the triumph of truth and religion. The Society of Friends was established, and Antonio's influence was long felt in that district; a considerable sum was subscribed to provide a printing press, good books were distributed, and much more would have been accomplished had the times been more favourable.

On his return home, he made overtures to a Venetian publisher, Battagia—one of the few who make business subservient to the cause of morality—for the reprinting of a little work entitled *Thesaurus Sacerdotum et Clericorum* [1] which he prefaced with a dedication to the clergy of Rovereto in words full of love for the Church and for his native land. Battagia wanted to print the work in Italian, but Rosmini persuaded him to issue it in Latin, the language of ecclesiastics, lest the force and the unction of the original should be lost in the translation.

His desire to see increased fervour amongst the clergy did not cause Rosmini to overlook the needs of the laity,

[1] Published by Battagia, Venice, 1822.

who are an essential part of the great Christian society. He felt that it was almost a necessity, considering the scarcity of priests at that time, to secure the co-operation of good lay persons, well instructed and truly pious. He bethought himself of introducing into Rovereto an Oratory like that of St. Philip Neri, and having arranged the business with Don C. Tranquillini warmly urged one of the Oratorian Fathers at Padua, Innocenzo Turrini, a great friend of his, to come and set the work on foot. Turrini came and made a beginning, but the enemy of all good made use of the cowardice of some and the indifference of others to bring these efforts to nought.

For the good of the laity, not for Roveretans exclusively, he attempted another charitable work about this time. It grieved him to see the press employed against religion and morality; he observed the influence of books on men's minds, and the eagerness of the wicked in making use of it. "Why," he would ask himself, "should not the same weapons be employed for a good purpose? Shall the children of this world always be wiser than the children of light?" These reflections gave rise to the idea of a printing press for the diffusion of works of sound doctrine, and as soon as he had formed his plan he sent a sketch of it to Battagia, as well as to Traversi, President of St. Catherine's College at Venice, to Brunati, and to others likely to favour it. The love of religion was to be the characteristic of the Society, and its protector, St. Jerome, whom he venerated for his love of study, his profound contemplation, and his eloquence. The motto he chose was *Nihil inde sperantes*, to signify that the undertaking was not to be carried out with a view to pecuniary gain. The Marquis Cesare Tapparelli d'Azeglio heard of the project, and wrote to him, asking him to join the Catholic Association at Turin and contribute to its organ, the *Amicizia Cattolica*. Rosmini, always ready to welcome an invitation of that kind, willingly consented, and a correspondence was thus begun between them which was always marked

by mutual reverence and affection, and maintained by the exchange of holy thoughts and sentiments. The idea of a publishing society seemed to him to come from God, and he did not fail to urge the matter, but the assistance of other good people was not forthcoming. They were, as usual, timid and irresolute; and once more the children of light proved themselves less zealous than the children of darkness.

These works of charity were for the public good, but we must notice others of a less conspicuous kind, equally beautiful in the eyes of Him who sees in secret, and promises a heavenly reward to the good done in secret. Rosmini, being now free to employ his property as he pleased, was mindful of his early resolution, by which he had consecrated himself and all that was his to the service of God, and proceeded at once to put it into practice. His friends had constant recourse to him in the interests of one poor person or another, and never in vain. Many letters from Beltrami and Tranquillini are still to be seen, containing the most candid and explicit requests. Now it is a poor man begging for a *house* and a *field*, again a poor woman who wants her cowshed repaired, at one time a family of eight or nine in want of clothing, at another, a poor sick person with five children to maintain; all around—

> "Misery and squalor,
> Urgent needs and wants unnumbered."

Occasionally the patrons would cut the matter short by sending their clients in person with a statement of the case, and then the business was soon settled.

These were private charities, and amongst them the most notable was Rosmini's liberal provision for Antonio Bassich, a Dalmatian from Perasto. He was a pious youth of irreproachable life, who had felt from his earliest years that the priesthood was his vocation, but when he declared his resolution his parents opposed him so vehemently that

he fell dangerously ill. No sooner had he recovered than he hastened to quit his home and cast himself on the care of Divine Providence, which decreed that after many wanderings he should be introduced by Traversi to Antonio Rosmini, who received him kindly as a guest and afterwards sent him to the seminary at Trent. Later on, to save him from fresh persecutions, he resolved to send the young cleric to Rome, and for this purpose applied to the Abate Mauro Cappellari, a Camaldolese monk and a native of Venice, who was then residing in the Eternal City. Cappellari undertook to arrange matters, and was so edified by Rosmini's generosity that he became one of his most devoted friends. This was the beginning of a friendship which remained unchanged when Cappellari became Cardinal and afterwards Supreme Pontiff.

Antonio Bassich, having entered the Propaganda, won the esteem and affection of his superiors, especially of Cappellari, and after his ordination returned to his native place, where he worked on quietly, doing much good for the remainder of his life. He lived many years after Rosmini's death, and was never deterred either by fear or bashfulness from blessing the memory of the holy priest who had been his incomparable friend and benefactor.

Such were some of the works by which Antonio Rosmini, whilst yet a deacon, prepared himself for the abundant graces he was to receive with the sacred anointing of the priesthood. In the April of 1821, the see of Trent being still vacant, he went to Chioggia to be ordained priest by Mgr. Manfrin Provedi, by whom he had been made deacon. It was on the 14th of April that he left Rovereto, accompanied by the Rev. Pietro Orsi, the Rev. G. Grasser, Director of the Tyrolese Academy, and a cleric named Anderlini. The two first remained at Venice, and Anderlini went on with him to Chioggia, where on Holy Saturday, April 21, he was ordained priest.

The sentiments of joyous trepidation, of burning charity, and deep emotion that stirred the young Levite's heart as

he bent his head beneath the consecrating hands are known only to God and His Angels. These secrets, concealed under the veil of humility, may be easily conjectured when we recall Rosmini's high idea of the priesthood, expressed by him as a boy in his own little academy, and remember that this was the goal of his ambition, not attained without a struggle. Deep, indeed, must have been the emotion of one who could never read, without interruption, the Gospel of St. John, because of the depth of feeling called forth by the sacred narrative.

Sealed with the seal of Christ he returned to Venice, where on Easter Sunday he said his first Mass in the Church of St. Catherine's College, surrounded by chosen friends, and far from those distractions which mar the sweetness and intensity of devotion. On the 24th he celebrated Mass in the Church of St. Anthony at Padua, and on the 25th at St. Anastasia's at Verona, whence he returned to Rovereto on the same day. He said Mass in the Oratory at home on the 28th of April, and on the 30th sang High Mass at St. Mark's, Rovereto, on which occasion Stofella, Paravia, Tommaseo, Valerio Fontana, and other friends flocked round him with congratulations and appropriate odes.

We have no witness, strictly speaking, to tell us how Rosmini celebrated those first Masses, but something may be gathered from the many and grave witnesses who watched him in later years.

The Rev. Father Villaresci, a learned priest, thus wrote concerning Rosmini: "When I beheld him at the altar celebrating the Holy Sacrifice, his piety and fervour were such as to move me to tears, and make me realise how the Saints celebrated the Divine Sacrifice. On leaving that blessed abode I carried away the conviction that Rosmini was not only an eminent philosopher, but a great saint." The Rev. Father Ludovico da Casoria, who made Rosmini's acquaintance at Naples in 1849, gave the following testimony more than thirty years afterwards: "I have

seen Rosmini celebrate Mass, and I was struck by the great piety manifested in his countenance; it gave me the impression that he was a venerable and profoundly pious priest." All attest unanimously that when offering the Holy Sacrifice he was emphatically a man of God; that at the altar he seemed rapt out of himself, more like a seraph than a mortal man, so that one would have thought he was speaking face to face with God; and that his countenance assumed so venerable an aspect before and after celebrating, that it would have seemed almost a sacrilege to intrude upon his privacy without grave reasons. If such was Rosmini's Mass after many years of priesthood, when long habit is wont to cool the warmth of piety, what must have been those first Masses, when the ardour of a young heart and the novelty of the action could not fail to quicken the fire of devotion!

CHAPTER VII

FIRST YEARS OF PRIESTHOOD—JOURNEY TO ROME (1821–1823)

THE years immediately preceding Father Rosmini's ordination had been a preparation for the great dignity of the priesthood; those which followed were a preparation for the establishment of the Institute of Charity.

His life now enters on a new phase, and we see him withdrawing as far as possible from those good works upon which he had formerly been ready to enter with such generous ardour. He devotes himself more than ever to a retired life of prayer and study, never leaving it unless urged, almost constrained, to do so. The good Father saw in the want of success which had attended many of his efforts for the good of his neighbour an indication of the Will of God, and he was thus providentially led to the principle which he termed "passivity." In the school of adversity the Divine Master had taught him that his vocation was not to be one of "enterprise," but that its spirit was to be one of quiet, humble expectation, of self-distrust, and of reliance on God alone, looking to Him for the inspiration and impetus to action, so as never to forestall the Divine appointment.

He followed out this principle at first almost instinctively, but soon defined it for himself, and made it the invariable rule of his life. Two other principles which he deduced from it for the regulation of his conduct are thus expressed in his own words: "I, a most unworthy priest, purpose to make the following principles my invariable rule of conduct. First, to think seriously of correcting my great faults and of purifying my soul from the sin which has

weighed it down from my very birth, not going in quest of other occupations or works of charity towards my neighbour; for I feel absolutely unable of myself to do anything for his benefit. Second, to refuse no office of charity towards my neighbour when Divine Providence presents it to me, for God is able to make use of any one, even of me, to accomplish His works. In that case I will, as far as my free-will is concerned, be perfectly indifferent with regard to works of charity, and do the one offered to me with as much zeal as I would any other."

This principle of passivity might seem, at the first glance, to favour inertia, but, carefully considered, it proves to be a sublime maxim taught in the Holy Gospel, and founded on the twofold conviction of the impotence of man and the omnipotence of God. It restrains man from undertaking anything of his own accord, but at the same time gives him courage to do great works as soon as he knows the Divine Will, for he feels that with God's help he can do all things. From this it is clear that passivity, rightly understood, far from producing inertia or sloth, gathers man's forces that they may not be squandered, and reserves them to be employed later on with greater profit; just as the dyke, imprisoning the waters of the mountain torrent that would have devastated the surrounding country, turns them off to fertilise more distant regions.

Father Rosmini, having once laid down this principle for his guidance, always kept it in view; indeed, perfect consistency between thought and action forms the most striking characteristic of his life.

From the earliest days of his priesthood we see him engaging only in the works of charity required by his state of life or by a clear manifestation of the Will of God, and devoting himself with ever-increasing ardour to prayer and study, which, being duties incidental to the priesthood, were undoubtedly in accord with the Divine Will. At this time he laid down a rule of life which he almost invariably followed till his death.

The early hours of the day were devoted to exercises of piety. On rising he spent an hour alone with God in devout meditation, and then prepared for Holy Mass. His Mass was somewhat long, on account of the grave and impressive manner in which he celebrated it. This may have been the reason why he preferred to say Mass privately, when possible. As a part of his thanksgiving, which lasted a considerable time, he was accustomed to read a portion of the Holy Scriptures kneeling, and in the course of the day he read other spiritual books, frequently during his meals. He visited the Blessed Sacrament and made examination of conscience daily, and every week he approached the Sacrament of Penance. The day closed with the recitation of the Rosary. Once a year, setting aside all temporal concerns, he passed ten or twelve days in strict retreat, either in some religious house or at his own country residence.

Study was regarded by him as the duty of a priest, and the consciousness of a special call from God urged him to pursue philosophical studies. Knowing how deeply religion and human society are injured by false systems of philosophy, Father Rosmini, encouraged by the counsel of wise persons who believed him destined to accomplish the work, resolved to devote his talents to the refutation of the many erroneous systems then prevailing, and to the consolidation of the system of truth, persuaded that this was the Will of God for him. To prayer and study, therefore, he applied himself as a duty until it should please God to open to him some other field of labour.

His tenacity of purpose on this point may be illustrated by two facts. The first was that he would not hear the confessions even of children—although he had obtained the necessary faculties—for fear of intruding on the sacred ministry against the Will of God, until the Rev. Father Locatelli, the archpriest, assured him that it was indeed the Divine Will. The second was his persistent refusal to establish the Institute of Sons of Charity at the urgent

entreaties of the Venerable Maddalena, Marchesa di Canossa. This holy woman it was who had dared with manly courage to say to Napoleon, "Sire, give me one of the convents you have suppressed and I will restore the work destroyed by you." Having obtained what she asked for, the Marchesa opened the convent assigned to her as an orphanage and a home for unprotected girls, and established her Daughters of Charity to carry on the work. She also wished to rescue poor neglected boys in the same way, and cast her eyes on Father Rosmini as one highly gifted by God, and evidently destined for some great work. With the discernment peculiar to holy souls, she had perceived his rare endowments when he was still a deacon, and on his elevation to the priesthood she at once laid before him her plan for "The Sons of Charity," begging him to carry it into effect. The young priest, who venerated Maddalena Canossa as a woman filled with the Spirit of God, received her proposal reverently, and corresponded with her on the subject for some years, suggesting certain modifications of her design to ensure its success, but he could never be induced to undertake the work himself, because he saw no clear sign of the Divine Will with regard to it. The Marchesa's endeavours were destined by God to lead to the realisation of another plan, greater and more original in conception, the foundation of the Institute of Charity, based on the principle of passivity which Father Rosmini had made the rule of his own life. Had it not been for the Marchesa Canossa's entreaties the Order might perhaps never have come into existence.

This reserve did not prevent him from fulfilling the duties imposed on him by charity, friendship, and social ties, or by the ordinary events and circumstances of life. In all this there was nothing foreign to the principle of passivity—it was an application of it; for, knowing by faith that God rules the universe with watchful and loving care and disposes all things for the instruction of mankind, Rosmini sought the signs of the Divine Will in all occur-

rences. Therefore we see him combining other works of charity with prayer and study, such as assisting poor families, reconciling those at variance, giving advice, encouragement, or assistance, as the case might be. His zeal for the glory of God prompted him to address an urgent letter to Prince Hohenlohe, a very holy priest gifted with miraculous power, begging him not to hide the gift of God under a bushel, nor to neglect the means of doing good to those sent to him by God. An instance of his own charity is found in the affectionate care bestowed on Nicolò Tommaseo, whose welfare he had so much at heart. The young man was studying the law, for which he had no taste, and before the end of his legal studies made some efforts to obtain a post in one of the public schools; upon which Rosmini interested himself in securing for him a government salary on condition of his becoming a professor. He passed his examination creditably, and all seemed satisfactorily arranged, when Tommaseo suddenly drew back through fear of annoying his father, who wished to see him a lawyer. Returning to Padua, he took his degree and went back to Dalmatia, where for a time he led a miserable existence, scarcely ever leaving his home, always attracted to Italy, but seeing no way of escape from his unsympathetic surroundings. Father Rosmini, who wished to see him happy and contented, constantly wrote to him in most affectionate terms, helped him with money, and generously offered him the hospitality of his own home with a salary if he would translate his work on Metaphysics (*Metafisica*) into Latin. He thus hoped to attract him to Rovereto, that he might assist him without wounding his feelings by offers of gratuitous help. After repeated invitations Tommaseo was at last induced to come, but at the end of a fortnight he went away again, "partly," as he said, "through wounded dignity and partly through pride." Still he admitted that Father Rosmini was great in heart as well as in genius, and his generous example was not without its effect upon him.

Sad experience soon convinced him, too, that it would have been better to sacrifice a little of his liberty by receiving a salary from a true friend, rather than to endeavour to gain a livelihood by placing his pen at the disposal of publishers and journalists, who were actuated by self-interest, and often proved to be harsh and unjust masters.

During these years of retirement, Antonio Rosmini left his peaceful home more than once when external circumstances showed him that such was the Divine Will. The first of these occasions was in the Lent of 1822, when Mgr. Sardagna, Vicar-General of the diocese, deputed him to assist the Rev. Bartolomeo Scrinzi, archpriest of Lizzana, who was laid prostrate by an incurable malady. The voice of his superior was to Father Rosmini the voice of God, and laying aside Plato and Aristotle, St. Augustine and St. Thomas, he hastened to Lizzana and devoted his energies to hearing the confessions of the poor people, visiting the sick, explaining the catechism to the village children and performing all the humble duties of a country parish priest. On Good Friday the Rev. B. Scrinzi died, after having received the last Sacraments, and his charitable assistant pronounced his eulogium [1] at the funeral obsequies in the presence of the parishioners, who had endeared themselves to him by their exemplary conduct and fervent piety. The people of Lizzana on their part were so much attached to Rosmini that they determined, at any cost, to have him for their parish priest; but he, though at first inclined to yield to their desire, concluded that if it had been the Will of God his superiors would have imposed the charge upon him; he therefore refused to undertake it, and returned to his quiet retreat.

He was not, however, to remain long undisturbed. At the solicitations of his friends, and in order, according to his principle of passivity, to complete a work already begun,

[1] *Orazione in morte di Don B. Scrinzi*, published by Veladini, Lugano, 1834.

he repaired to Pavia in May to take his degree of Doctor in Theology and Canon Law, which he did on June 23rd. A dissertation on *The Sybil* delivered on the occasion was remarkable for its skilful treatment of the subject. His friends, amongst whom were his cousin Carlo Rosmini and Paravia, were loud in their praise of the new doctor, whilst Tommaseo prophesied his future destiny in an elegant Latin composition.

Once more in his dear solitude, he resumed the life of prayer and study which seemed a sweet and imperative necessity. It was soon interrupted anew by a journey to Innsbruck with the Rev. P. Orsi in October to meet Mgr. Grasser and accompany him to Rovereto. This prelate, who had accompanied Antonio Rosmini to Chioggia for his ordination, had been chosen by the Government of Vienna for the bishopric of Treviso, and feeling the need of help and counsel, he appealed to his young friend. Nor did he appeal in vain. Besides the advice most cordially given, he received an invitation to spend some time at Rovereto to enable him to acquire the Italian language—for the new bishop was a German. Father Rosmini went to meet him, and retained him as his guest for nearly two months. In the following February Mgr. Grasser passed through Rovereto on his way to Venice to receive episcopal consecration, and invited Father Rosmini and the Rev. P. Orsi to Venice for the ceremony, and to accompany him afterwards to his new diocese. Three days only were spent at Treviso, but the good bishop continued to consult him, and was never ashamed to profess his esteem and gratitude, declaring moreover that the friendship of Antonio Rosmini was an honour even to a bishop, and that, next to the Divine assistance, the greatest help to bear the burden of the episcopate had been given him by the young Roveretan priest.

The reason of Father Rosmini's hasty departure from Treviso was that he had to make preparation for a longer journey with Mgr. Ladislas Pyrrker, Patriarch of Venice.

This ecclesiastic, who was a Hungarian by birth, had been called from the humble cell of a Cistercian monk to administer the diocese of Zips and afterwards that of Venice. He had made the young priest's acquaintance in 1822, and met him again at Mgr. Grasser's consecration. So great was the esteem he conceived for him during their brief intercourse that he wished to take him to Rome, and Father Rosmini, much as he regretted the further interruption to his studies, felt that he could not refuse the Patriarch's kind and courteous invitation. Having fulfilled the Easter precept on Holy Thursday at Rovereto, he went to Venice to spend Easter Sunday with the Patriarch, and on the following day, 1st April, he set out with him for Rome. The travellers broke their journey at Loreto to visit that venerable sanctuary. We may well imagine the joy with which our Father's heart overflowed at the sight of the humble dwelling in which the "Blessed amongst women" received from Gabriel the announcement of the "long sighed-for peace"; for the fact that he was born on the eve of the Annunciation and baptized on the Feast itself had always appeared to him a precious and singular grace, and a motive for intense gratitude.

On the evening of Low Sunday, April 6, 1823, the party entered Rome. He thus describes in a letter to his mother his feelings on visiting those holy and venerable monuments with which the city abounds. "You cannot imagine how delightful it is to meet at every turn the marvellous works of art that Uncle Ambrogio used to describe so vividly. There are few things that are quite new to me, and I could give the history of many of them, thanks to the impression left by the words of one so dear to me." Although this was his first visit to Rome, his name was already esteemed and venerated there, notably at Propaganda, and amongst the Camaldolese monks at St. Romuald's, on account of his generosity towards the Rev. Antonio Bassich, who had spoken much of his great benefactor. He had been enrolled in the *Academy of Religion* in the previous year, and

now his presence with the Patriarch afforded him the opportunity of making many valuable acquaintances; amongst others of Cardinals Consalvi and Somaglia and of Cardinal Castiglione (afterwards Pius VIII.); the Abate Cappellari of St. Romuald's, and Zurla, not yet cardinals; and Bellenghi, afterwards Bishop of Nicosia. He was also introduced to Ostini, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the Gregorian University, Canon Belli, and the Abate Angelo Mai—the Cuvier of paleography—who were all three afterwards raised to the purple. But he set the highest value on his introduction to the noble Pontiff whose meekness had vanquished the conqueror of Europe. Cardinal Cappellari, who before many years had passed, was himself to ascend the papal throne, conducted Father Rosmini into the presence of Pius VII. The aged Pontiff received the young priest with the utmost benignity, and on learning that he was a devoted student of philosophical science, encouraged him to give himself up to its pursuit, at the same time bestowing on him a gift as a token of fatherly kindness. The words of the Vicar of Christ filled him with joy, and gave a new impetus to his studies.

Offers of preferment were made to induce him to remain at Rome; the Pope himself giving him to understand that he would make him Auditor of the Rota—a step to higher honours. The dignities offered to him by those to whom he owed such deference, the love of learning, the desire and the hope of doing good, might have proved a temptation irresistible even to great souls; yet Father Rosmini refused courteously but decidedly. His humility was alarmed by these offers; he had resolved not to accept too easily any office which might hinder a greater good; and we may perhaps add to these reasons for refusal, an instinctive fore-knowledge of his destiny.

On the 29th of April 1823, our pilgrims bade farewell to the Eternal City, and on the 16th of May, Antonio Rosmini, to his indescribable joy, found himself at home once more, in possession of that peace and recollection for which he

had longed even amidst the splendours of Rome. Writing to thank the Patriarch for his kindness, he adds the simple but significant words : " Here nothing is unwelcome to me, even after seeing Rome."

It is now time to say a word about Antonio's studies during this period. The reader will recall the proof of extraordinary maturity of judgment given by him when, still a youth, he investigated the origin of human cognitions and formulated the supreme principle of philosophy ; and how at Padua he had contemplated the restoration of the sciences, and had sketched the plan of an *Encyclopedia* which should show the harmony between natural and revealed truth. The time had now come for carrying out his project, and he set to work energetically as soon as he was ordained. In January 1822 he began a work on the *Order of the Sciences*, and in the same month read before the local academy a dissertation on the *Political Economy of the Ancient Italians*. The *Metaphysics* must also have been partly written, as we find him inviting Tommaseo to translate it. However, in the December of this year he felt obliged to leave speculative studies and turn to political science, the result being a voluminous work in thirteen books, which later on was re-arranged so as to form three distinct works: viz., *The Primary Cause of the Stability or the Ruin of Human Societies ;*[1] *Society and its End ;*[2] and *The Natural Constitution of Civil Society*. Nor was literature overlooked. With a mind matured by the study of the Bible and the Fathers of the Church, of Aristotle and St. Thomas, he wrote a brief annotation of Dante's *Divina Commedia ;*[3] and planned a more extensive work on the same subject, *Del Bello Universale Della Divina Commedia*, which was to treat in five discourses—(1) On the architecture of the universe according to Dante, (2) On politics, (3) Moral philosophy, (4) Theology, (5) The art of oratory

[1] *Sommaria Cagione per cui Stanno e Rovinano le Umane Società.* Milan, Pogliani, 1837 ; Naples, Battelli, 1842.

[2] *La Società e suo fine*, published by Pogliani, Milan, 1839.

[3] *Dante*, published in the *Letteratura e Arti Belli.* Bertolotti, Intra, 1873.

and poetry in Dante. The second of these was the only one completed. We may mention further the *Essay on Happiness*, which is a fragment of his work on the *Order of the Sciences*, dedicated to Mgr. Grasser; his funeral oration for the Rev. B. Scrinzi, and the letter to Don Giovanni Stefani *On Christian Teaching*;[1] less important works though not without a touch of genius. In the letter on Christian teaching, Rosmini places before the catechist, as a model of the perfect instructor, Christ Himself, the Word of God, instructing mankind, speaking "as one having power," and imparting to men words of eternal life. In order to imitate this Divine exemplar it is necessary, he tells us, to have "a truly Christian mind, a heart full of charity, and be prepared to understand the things of God by assiduous prayer and meditation." He proceeds to show that though eloquence is not to be despised, those who instruct others must first preach to themselves and convert their own hearts if they wish to move the hearts of others, "that they may impart to others of their own abundance."

The works of a great man mirror forth the greatness of his mind; all, even the least important, bear its impress, just as in the boundless ocean, in the lakes, in the stream that waters the valley, and even in the dew-drop that trembles on the blade of grass, is reflected the wide expanse of the smiling sky above.

[1] *Sul Cristiano Insegnamento*, published by Pogliani, Milan, 1838.

CHAPTER VIII

THREE YEARS MORE AT ROVERETO—FIRST IDEA OF THE INSTITUTE OF CHARITY (1823–1826)

ANTONIO ROSMINI was not forgotten at Rome ; and amongst those whom he had met there, Cappellari, Zurla, and Belli were foremost in urging him to return. How great soever his attraction towards the capital of Christendom, he saw no indication of the Will of God, and remained at Rovereto. "I love Rome," he wrote to a friend, "and it has sometimes occurred to me that, if I could believe it to be the Divine Will, I might leave my home and devote all my feeble powers to any work entrusted to me by my superiors. But another and more powerful thought seems to say, 'Do not lightly abandon the position in which God has placed thee.'" So he remained nearly three years longer at Rovereto, leading the life of prayer, study, and peaceful labour above described. There is a monotony in the record of such a period, which from another point of view displays the virtue of one so highly gifted, who could not fail to be conscious of his immense capabilities, and could yet subdue and restrain them, making them subservient to the principle of passivity, suggested as his guide by reason and faith.

In August 1823 the long and chequered life of Pius VII. came to a close. Father Rosmini was invited to deliver the funeral oration [1] at the solemn obsequies celebrated in St. Mark's, Rovereto, and he did so with a heart full of veneration and gratitude towards the great Pontiff who had received him only a few months before with such paternal kindness. The theme of his discourse was the

[1] *Panegirico di Pio Settimo*, published in the volume entitled *Prose*. Veladini, Lugano, 1834.

moral greatness of the Pontiffs exemplified in the person of Pius VII. Starting from the Divine origin of this greatness, he proposed to himself not so much the panegyric of the departed Pontiff as the praise of God whom he represented. Hence the text he chose was: *Major est qui in vobis est, quam qui in mundo* (1 S. John iv. 4). He reviewed the true relations of the Sovereign Pontiffs with the secular powers, as illustrated in the action of Pius VII., who declared that, being "Vicar of the Lord of Peace," he could not enter into any offensive alliance with Napoleon against England, as he ought not to be at war with any one. He shows how the Holy Father justly maintained this course to be according to the true spirit of the Roman Pontificate, and how the example of his predecessors made it manifest that the spirit of the Holy See is one of uprightness, benevolence, and sacerdotal meekness. The rough draft of this discourse was the substance of a fuller panegyric of Pius VII. which he prepared for publication at the request of his friends, in order to counteract the adulation showered on Napoleon by fawning admirers, especially by Giordani, who in his panegyric of the Emperor Napoleon had gone so far as to style his hero the Divine, Best, and Greatest, the one Saviour and Restorer of the human race.

Father Rosmini's pamphlet was submitted to the censor at Venice, was sent on to Vienna, Innsbruck, and Trent, but no *Imprimatur* could be obtained. Some thought the sketch of Napoleon overdrawn, others considered the discourse savoured of papistry, and many shuddered at the final apostrophe to Italy. So the panegyric travelled from place to place for two years, and it was only in February 1826 that the author recovered it, thanks to Mgr. Ostini, Internuncio at Vienna—such part of it, at least, as had escaped the clippings of the censors. "They treat me like a Carbonaro and even worse," the good Father wrote to Mgr. Grasser in his distress. "It is true all is done secretly, and I only hear of it by accident, but what afflicts me most

is that I am wounded in the dark, as it were, and any enemy or slanderer may safely rejoice in the success of his false accusations. All this, however, cannot take away my peace, thanks be to God for it." These were the first fruits of the sorrows which his outspoken love of truth was to draw down upon him.

The eulogium of Pius VII. intensified the esteem in which the clergy of Rovereto already held their young colleague, and several of them waited on him with a request that he would direct their theological conferences as their guide and master. To this he consented. On the Festival of All Saints he assembled them in his own house, and began a course of lectures on St. Thomas which lasted nearly two years. They read the *Summa* together, and, astonished at the clearness of his explanations, they would exclaim on their way out, "This little priest makes St. Thomas as clear as water to us, while formerly it used to seem as black as ink." So they honoured him with the title of *Il Tommasino*.

A small work, *De Divi Thomæ Aquinatis Studio apud Recentiores Theologos Instaurando*, which he began about this time, was suggested by his desire of reviving the study of Aquinas. On account of his numerous occupations it never got beyond the first chapter, though he had set to work at it with great goodwill, and in a letter to Tommaseo he thus sketches his plan. "I have begun the Latin work on St. Thomas Aquinas, whose genius I hold to be in no way inferior to Newton's. I reproach the Italians at the outset for not recognising the treasure they possess in a genius who might be a source of glory to the nation. Then proceeding to point out his merit as a wise theologian, I inquire into the causes which have led to his being so little studied, and I find them in the decay of the study of Aristotle, whose merits and deficiencies I touch upon. I next show which part of that philosophy might be revived with advantage, and appear more brilliant now than before. I then proceed to give in modern style a brief

exposition of the Aristotelian philosophy, by which abridgement of Aristotle's system, purged of its errors and perfected by the lofty intellect of the angelic doctor, I believe I am appending to the works of this mighty genius the one means of understanding them."

He was anxious to promote the study of St. Thomas by a new and accurate edition of his works, and several letters written at this time show his practical interest in the efforts made by a Venetian publisher, Battagia, to supply this want. Fifty years later the zeal and munificence of Leo XIII. accomplished what Father Rosmini had attempted as a private individual; for the Sovereign Pontiff revived the study of St. Thomas by his celebrated Encyclical, and provided an edition of the holy doctor's works. Father Rosmini's efforts to secure this result in his own day prove the truth of Manzoni's saying, that he was half a century in advance of his time. His desire to see sacred and profane studies flourish in his native town was manifested by the efforts he made on behalf of the *Accademia degli Agiati*, for which in 1823, at the request of the authorities, he drew up a new set of Constitutions better adapted to the needs of the times.

On the 1st of January 1824 he wrote by way of recreation *La Carta di Scusa*,[1] a dialogue between a nobleman and a literary man; and in the early part of the same year brought out a work on geological research by Bellenghi, who could not publish it in Rome because the Master of the Sacred Palace was averse to geological opinions not based on Aristotelian theories.

In July 1824 he left home for about three weeks with Maurizio Moschini, a youth of great promise and a much-loved friend, whom he employed as secretary, reader, and assistant in his studies. They went to Milan by way of Riva, Brescia, and Bergamo, thence to Piacenza, Parma, and Modena, and home again by Verona. This journey was undertaken by Rosmini in the interest of his studies, it

[1] *La Carta di Scusa*, published by Veladini, Lugano, 1834.

would seem, no less than of health, and he wished at the same time to visit some of his former friends, as well as to make the personal acquaintance of some who were known to him only by correspondence. He saw Brunati and Stefani at Brescia, Cesari at Verona ; at Milan, his cousin Carlo Rosmini, Dr. Labus, and the Marquis Trivulzio ; at Modena there were Baraldi, Parenti, Fabriani, Bianchi, and Celestino Cavedoni, men rich in virtue and learning, able writers in a periodical known as the *Memorie di Religione di Morale e di Letteratura*. From them he parted with the conviction that union amongst good men, whilst adding to their influence, would prepare happier days for the Church.

On his return home he sent to Baraldi for publication in the *Memorie* an essay on *The Opinions of Melchior Gioia*,[1] a refutation of that form of sensism which reduces morality to a question of utility or pleasure. He assisted the clergy of Rovereto in bringing out a translation of the *Life of St. Jerome* from a manuscript of the thirteenth century, on occasion of Mgr. Luschin's entry into his diocese. The critical notes which he appended to the list of emendations in this work were highly esteemed for their philological value. The study of mathematics and philosophy, however, always occupied the first place, especially that portion which links politics with religion ; the political work begun in 1822 assumed such gigantic proportions that he was almost dismayed himself, and nothing but the conviction that he was fulfilling the designs of God could have induced him to proceed with energy and confidence. This intense application soon told upon his health, and in June 1825 he was laid prostrate by inflammation and violent fever. Writing to Mauro Capellari he says, " My health is very uncertain : I desire neither health nor infirmity, but a little more virtue, so that, whether ill or well, I may be able to serve God." A little rest and a course of waters at Recoaro

[1] *Della Filosofia di M. Gioia*, published in the *Apologetica*. Milan, Pogliani, 1840; Speirani, Turin, 1880.

soon enabled him to devote himself once more to the work above mentioned.

Leisure moments were devoted to shorter essays, not unworthy of mention; one *On the Providence of God in the Distribution of Temporal Good and Evil;* another on *The Unity of Education* addressed to Stefani, and a third on *Idylls*[1] to Taverna; to these we may add a letter to Professor Bonelli *On the Classification of Philosophical Systems and on the Dispositions Necessary for the Discovery of Truth.*

The first of these essays—*On Divine Providence*—was the fruit of sweet and loving meditation, and though at first intended for insertion in the last volume of an edition of Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, it was eventually produced at Milan in 1826. The essay on *Education* shows how the remedy for the evils that afflict the human race is to be found in the Christian education of the young, and that in order to make it efficacious, *unity* must be its dominant feature. *Unity* of *end*, for the end is God; *unity* of *doctrine*, for, though many, all doctrines are united in truth which informs them; *unity* of *method*, for the human faculties are so ordered by the Christian spirit as to work harmoniously together; mind, heart, and actions, all tending towards the one end.

Though written on a variety of subjects, the essays helped to refute erroneous opinions and clear the ground for a philosophical edifice to be erected later on. Our author does not confine himself to lofty theories, but descends to the most minute particulars of the practical work of education. He gives wise counsel on the question of the study of the classics, and in his letter to Bonelli he refutes modern realism, promising a solution of the problem of the origin of ideas in the *Nuovo Saggio*,[2] which Tommaseo assures us he was already preparing in 1825.

One would have thought he could find little time for

[1] *Idillio*, published in vol. i. *Opuscoli Filosofici*. Pogliani, Milan, 1827. In the *Letteratura ed Arti Belle*. Bertolotti, Intra, 1870.

[2] *Nuovo Saggio*, 6th edition, published by Bertolotti, Intra, 1875. Translated into English, Kegan Paul, London, 1883.

other work, but where charity reigns, time and strength are multiplied. Father Rosmini studied for the love of God, therefore he was ready at the Divine call to set his books aside without hesitation. Faithful to his resolution of accepting the opportunities of doing good furnished him by Providence, he would readily comply with the desires of his parish priest that he should preach, assist at public functions, or hear confessions ; he directed in the paths of piety those youths and others who relied on him, helped some by retreats to enter on the way of perfection, and encouraged in the love of religion and science young students exposed to the dangers of city life. The duties of friendship were not overlooked, and he continued to be open-handed and generous in dispensing hospitality and charity, always bestowing his alms wisely according to the order of charity, so that his assistance might not encourage idleness and sloth, or prove in any way injurious to the recipients. That the spiritual interests of his native place were dear to him he proved by endeavouring to introduce into Rovereto the Vincentian Fathers and the Marchesa Canossa's Daughters of Charity. Those who should have been first to aid in their establishment refused any assistance, and he at once advised his sister Margherita to provide a house for the Sisters out of her own property, rather than ask alms from the unwilling.

About this time he suggested to Cardinal Cappellari the institution of a Feast to commemorate the Martyrs of the French Revolution, for it seemed to him that it would celebrate the triumph of religion over infidelity, and enkindle zeal for truth by the remembrance of those generous souls who had given their lives for the Faith. Many other instances of his zeal and charity we must pass unnoticed in order to say something of Nicolò Tommaseo's case. A month had scarcely elapsed after his sudden departure for Padua, when he found himself compelled by necessity to have recourse to Father Rosmini once more. This true friend, quite overlooking the slight he had received, at

once sent him two hundred lire, and endeavoured to secure a position for him in some Italian university, but Tommaseo refused to submit to certain tests, and the matter fell through. In 1824, wishing to remove to Milan, he again applied to Father Rosmini for money, and on being refused, broke off all correspondence. His friend, who knew Nicoletto's good heart, excused his eccentricities, which he attributed to morbid fancy, and continued to help him secretly, by recommending him to his cousin Carlo at Milan, who for Rosmini's sake would take an interest in his welfare. Tommaseo managed to secure a scanty livelihood by writing for a publisher until the middle of 1825, when he quarrelled with his employer, and found himself once more in want. On his application to Father Rosmini for a loan, his friend again forwarded him a remittance, by means of which and by the sale of some few belongings he managed to live on till November. At last, half starved, with only three pence in the world, he went to Manzoni to beg a couple of shillings. Only in these straits did he finally resolve to accept Father Rosmini's oft-repeated offers of hospitality, and in the beginning of January 1826 he set out for Rovereto at night, on foot, alone and shabbily dressed. The reception he met with was not only cordial but festive; and, sobered by the experience of years of misfortune, he began to value a true friend, and entered on a new life, so edifying, studious, and retired that the good Father was abundantly consoled.

To the many works of charity done by Father Rosmini during these years must be added all that he suffered, for souls singularly dear to God are sanctified no less by their sufferings than by their works. Was this apparently tranquil life, we may ask, really marked by profound sorrow? Undoubtedly it was. Antonio Rosmini concealed as far as possible what time has brought to light in proof of his virtue, viz., suffering meekly borne, caused by one whose eccentricities and strange temperament call for compassion rather than for censure.

We have seen that Pier Modesto had left only one-sixth of his fortune to his son Giuseppe; and to pacify his brother, Antonio generously added much of his own. His efforts, however, were fruitless; Giuseppe was not mollified, and began to annoy Antonio with most extravagant demands. On his father's death he asked to have four horses for his own private use, adding other requirements of a similar nature: but as Antonio was unwilling to humour his folly, he handed him a written declaration that he would enlist as a soldier and go away to spend what he had, unless three-fifths of the inheritance were made over to him. Antonio, fearing that his brother would carry out this threat, but at the same time wishing to fulfil his father's desire, as a sort of compromise offered Giuseppe the administration of his own share of the property, and the management of the household as well, provided that he was consulted on matters of importance. The proposal was received with contempt, and Giuseppe, having failed to obtain what he demanded, continued to harass his brother with other wild schemes, even appealing to strangers to uphold his projects. Still, Antonio's patience was proof against these afflictions, and he endeavoured to hide them even from his mother, lest she should be grieved. One day, to bring the matter to an end, he said to Giuseppe, "Well now, let us come to an agreement, though I daresay I shall have cause to repent it: let us divide everything equally, and live together like good brothers in peace and concord." Even this offer was rejected with scorn; the proposal was a generous mistake, and God did not allow it to be accepted. Only one who has seen true affection requited with ingratitude can enter into Father Rosmini's feelings under this trial. How painful it must have been to live in this way for years without a token of friendship, goodwill, or thankfulness from one who lived in the same house, ate at the same table, and was a much-loved brother!

In the autumn of 1824, his only sister Margherita left

home to give herself to God amongst the Daughters of Charity founded by the Marchesa Canossa. Here was a new sacrifice which aggravated his burden, for although he in no way regretted her choice—indeed he looked upon it with a holy envy—still it was a separation from the gentle companion of his early years, an angel of virtue, the only one, perhaps, who was aware of his trial and could help him to bear it. Left without his sister, he still went on for another year full of confidence in God, until things reached such a pass that it seemed a lesser evil to leave his home for good. However, he resolved to make one more attempt to gain his brother over by loving and gentle words; but the reply he received was like a sword-thrust to his affectionate heart. In this way his sojourn in his own home, even to the last day, was not without bitterness.

The tribulations by which his soul was chastened fitted it to receive heavenly illumination, and we cannot doubt that the reward of his long-suffering was the vivid light sent by God just at the close of 1825, to show him his future path.

The reader will remember that the Marchesa Canossa invited Antonio Rosmini, in 1821, to found an order of priests similar to her Institute of Daughters of Charity, and that he hesitated because the Divine Will was not clear on the point. On the 10th of December 1825, having occasion to write to her after two years' silence, it occurred to him that he could not, consistently with his principle of passivity, refuse to co-operate in a work so repeatedly pressed upon him, if God should place the means at his disposal. He reflected, too, that in such a case the fundamental principles of the Society ought to be the same that he had chosen for the regulation of his own life: and in a moment the idea of the Institute of Charity stood out before him clearly defined! Taking up his pen he wrote to the Marchesa that he had never lost sight of her suggestion about the Sons of Charity; that, having long considered the matter in the sight of God, he thought it

should be a society of priests, not of laymen ; and that at the same time a desire had arisen in his heart, which would probably never leave him. He then laid the design of the Institute before her, that she might help him by prayer and counsel. It was but a sketch, to be in due time filled in, worked at, and completed in its various parts, and finally to be carried into effect; but this was a matter to be left to Providence and to time, which is God's servant.

Father Rosmini, without anxiety for the future, in recollection, silence, and prayer humbly awaited the hour appointed by God, who would, he felt confident, enable him to carry into effect the inspiration vouchsafed to him.

CHAPTER IX

RESIDENCE AT MILAN (1826–1828)

On the 25th of February 1826 Rosmini left Rovereto. Wishing to soften for his mother the pain of parting, he took occasion to accompany his sister on her return to Verona from Trent, whither she had gone with the Marchesa Canossa to open a new convent. Moschini and Tommaseo went with him, also Antonio Bisoffi, a servant, and on the 4th of March they arrived at Milan after a few days' stay at Verona.

Many reasons, besides the domestic afflictions to which we have alluded, induced him to fix his abode at Milan. His studies now demanded helps which Rovereto could not provide; he had works ready for publication and others in progress which he could bring out with greater expedition in that city; and lastly, there was a good work to which Providence had called him, viz., the direction of three souls strongly recommended to him by the Marchesa Canossa—Boselli, a deacon, Bonetti, a jeweller, and Carzana, a blacksmith, in whom that good lady discerned the nucleus of the "Sons of Charity" she had so much at heart.

Rooms were engaged for him at the *Croce di Malta*, an hotel close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, not far from the *Casa Trivulzio*, where his cousin Carlo resided, and near the Ambrosian Library. He drew up a rule of life for himself, which in great part his companions also observed. Six o'clock was fixed for rising; then prayer, followed by Mass at seven at San Sepolcro. After a short interval for breakfast, study till noon. A light refection was succeeded by study again till three. The hours of

study were divided between preparing matter and dictating it to Moschini. At three o'clock the Divine Office was recited, followed by spiritual reading in common. They dined at four, and afterwards took a walk or paid visits to friends, and returned home between seven and eight o'clock. After reciting the rosary at nine, each retired to his own room and went to rest at ten. This simple and regular way of living, and still more, the cordial charity of the little family, which made it almost like a religious community, seemed a sort of prelude to the life at Calvario so soon to follow.

The sweet tranquillity enjoyed by the young priest in this kind of life was enhanced by his surroundings. He was never tired of praising the goodness and kindliness of the Milanese, saying that if they lacked something of the graceful refinement of the Venetians, the depth of the Lombard character imparted a note of solidity to their courtesy and politeness. The clergy, though not very learned, he admired for their sincere piety, regular discipline and prudence, and their straightforwardness in the exercise of their ministry without wounding charity. The nobility amidst their splendour and magnificence, were so courteous and affable as to place every one at his ease. Above all, he remarked the solid piety of the Milanese; the fruit, as he said, of seed sown by St. Charles Borromeo, that prodigy of holiness, whose footsteps he seemed to trace wherever he went, and the impress of whose living spirit constantly raised Father Rosmini's heart in gratitude to God.

One of the most precious results of his sojourn at Milan was that he made many valuable acquaintances, some of which led to lifelong friendships. Two of these faithful friends were Mellerio and Manzoni, who merit more than a passing mention. Count Mellerio was twenty years Father Rosmini's senior. A native of Domodossola, he found himself, on the demise of his father and uncle, heir to twelve million francs, and having resolved to bestow half

his yearly income on the poor, he more than kept his resolution. He was a man of spotless life, believed by those who knew him best never to have lost his baptismal innocence, sincerely devout, severe with himself, gentle and kind to others. In his public life and high official capacity as Vice-President of the Milanese Government and Privy Councillor of the Emperor, he exerted himself to the utmost for the welfare of Italy, ever dear to his heart, and when he saw his efforts for her good frustrated, he resigned his office with noble scorn and retired into private life. Such was the man whom Antonio Rosmini felt drawn from the first to choose as a friend and confidant; Mellerio, on his part, entered at once into Rosmini's thoughts and plans, and was by the favour of God enabled to assist in carrying them out.

It was through Mellerio, to whom Carlo Rosmini had introduced him, that he became acquainted with Manzoni. Though they had been educated in different schools of literature, young Rosmini could not fail to discern the breath of genius in the works of the Lombard writer, that power which was to infuse new life and vigour into Italian literature. Manzoni had some years previously read Rosmini's *Christian Education*, and pronounced it to be worthy of the first ages of the Church and of the early Fathers, while on reading the treatise on *Divine Providence* he exclaimed "God has given a great man to Italy and to the Church." Even before their meeting they esteemed each other highly, and when Tommaseo introduced the young philosopher to the poet whose laurels were already won, the latter came forward with outstretched hands and smiling recognition, and greeted him in prophetic words, with the salutation of the apostle: *O quam speciosa pedes evangelizantium pacem, evangelizantium bona* (Rom. x. 15). Other visits, gradually more frequent, followed this one; long and intimate conversations on literature, philosophy, politics, ethics, and religion ensued, which became at times animated debates, but always calm and courteous. Manzoni, who

had been on intimate terms with certain philosophers of the French school, found it difficult to admit some of Father Rosmini's philosophical principles; indeed, he occasionally appeared almost to side with the Marchese Ermes Visconti, then a sceptic, in his disdain for the young priest who professed to see further than the sages north of the Alps. But as he became better acquainted with Rosmini, he entered more fully into his philosophical tenets, and ended by completely adopting them—an agreement of mind which intensified their friendship.

Milan was the home of many other worthy friends, men of noble birth and men distinguished in the literary world. To the first class belonged Don Luigi Polidori of Loreto, brother of Cardinal Polidori; Counts Somaglia, Castelbarco, and Padulli, relatives of Mellerio; the Marquises of Trivulzio, Visconti, and Arconati, Counts Andreani, Dugnani, and Casati; amongst men of letters were Labus the archæologist, Piola the mathematician, Mazzetti, Monti, Samuele Biava, Michele Sartorio, and Achille Mauri. The last three, young men of talent and much promise, wrote with Tommaseo in the *Ricoglitore*, a journal intended to counteract the baneful influence of the *Biblioteca Italiana*, which had been issued under the protection of the censorship and assailed the most celebrated names with impunity. Antonio Rosmini liberally gave his friends help, counsel, and encouragement in their work.

Only the later hours of the day, however, were given to them; the earlier and greater part being devoted exclusively to study. The first work to which he set himself was the *Philosophy of Politics*, begun some years previously at Rovereto. This he now enlarged and re-cast, and completed the first book in less than five months. Other less important works occupied odd moments, and the essays on *Divine Providence* [1] and on the *Unity of Education* [2] were printed. In these studies he always looked for

[1] *Opuscoli Filosofici*, Milan, 1827 (Pogliani).

[2] *Scritti Varii*, published at Turin, 1883. Unione Tipografico ed.

guidance to the Divine Will, which he called "the only star of his life." This was so true that, however devotedly he might have laboured at them, he was ready to withdraw from them without a moment's hesitation, whenever he knew it to be God's will. "If I could believe," he wrote to Mgr. Luschin, his bishop, "that the voice of duty called me to give up the works now so far advanced, I would most willingly abandon them at once and make a sacrifice to God of all the labour I have gone through. I only desire to do what is best."

He never hesitated to leave his studies for the humblest works of charity when called by Providence. On St. Philip's Day he preached at S. Satiro; he attended the meetings of the little Oratory, and would sometimes, when invited to do so, address the boys and young men. His words and his presence cheered and helped on the little party of clerics who met at the Abate Marietti's; but, before all, he interested himself in the three good souls recommended to him by the Marchesa Canossa. He invited them to visit him on Sundays, and exhorted them to fervent love of God and the desire of a perfect life. Nor did his charity lose sight of friends at a distance. The Rev. P. Orsi was commissioned to dispense his alms at Rovereto to some students of scanty means; Orsi's brother, Don Paolo, was requested to undertake the spiritual direction of some youths who had been under Father Rosmini's guidance. Several young girls from Rovereto obtained admission to the Daughters of Charity through his good offices with the Marchesa Canossa. He sent word to the "excellent brigade of Thomists"—as he called the priests who used to spend the evenings with him over the *Summa*—that the Thomist Rosmini was still in existence, hoping some day to resume his study with them, and he encouraged them to pursue it in friendly union. Now and then he sent a thesis to the members of the academy, and encouraged and helped them to print the works of Clementino Vannetti. Perhaps the strongest proof of his nobility of soul and

large-hearted charity is the attempt to bring Trent and Rovereto to a better understanding by uniting the academies of the *Accesi* and the *Agiati* into one *Literary Society of the Italian Tyrol*, and thus put an end to the rivalries lately re-awakened between the two towns.

He had been barely six months at Milan when his health began to fail from over-work, and he was advised to visit his home and see what the crisp mountain air would do for him. He first spent a week with the Oblates at Rho to refresh his spirit in solitude and prepare for the Jubilee of the Holy Year. On the 15th of September he started for home, taking with him his cousin Carlo, who had not seen the Tyrol for seventeen years. Study hours were now reduced to moderate proportions, and more time was given to learned and pleasant discourse with the friends who gathered eagerly around him.

Tommaseo, Moschini, and Carlo Rosmini were joined by Stofella, the Orsi brothers, Beltrami and Valerio Fontana, Paravia from Venice, and Count Cesare Castelbarco from Milan. Now and then Father Cesari would come over from Verona with Dr. Zamboni and Monterossi ; Pompeati occasionally visited him from Trent, and more frequently Pederzani from Villa Lagarina. In fact, during the autumn Rovereto was like a little metropolis of the scientific world, so many were the men noted for genius and erudition who gathered within its walls.

In November, being somewhat improved in health, Father Rosmini resumed his former occupation at Milan with the same companions. In December, however, Tommaseo again left him, after eleven months peacefully spent under his roof. He had been on the point of leaving in the previous May, on account of the Father's disapproval of a pamphlet he had prepared for the press, which would have occasioned needless controversy and breaches of charity. He was soon mollified, however, and stayed on till December, when he began to imagine that the servants and the visitors looked down upon him as a dependent,

whilst he considered he might easily support himself by his pen. He accordingly offered to pay for his board, but Father Rosmini would not hear of this; he wanted a friend, not a boarder, yet the amicable contest ended in a separation. They remained on friendly terms, but Rosmini was grieved, fearing that his friend might become a slave to publishers, and be made the sport of shifting opinions. Tommaseo himself, writing of this episode some years later, expresses his admiration of the forbearance and gentleness with which his noble friend treated him at this time, and confesses his own want of deference and submission, noting how Rosmini would occasionally admonish him of his failings by silence or a few well-measured and kindly words.

With Moschini alone to assist him Father Rosmini now continued to labour at the work on politics before mentioned. He wrote the second part on *Natural Right*,[1] and began the third on *The Natural Constitution of Civil Society*. As he went on, the arduous path seemed to grow delightful, but perceiving that this work presupposed a knowledge of his metaphysical system, he came to the conclusion that its publication would be premature. Some smaller works produced at the close of 1826 were the result of his careful management of time and of curtailing his evening walk or his sleep. One of these was a treatise on *Usury* (apparently written at the suggestion of the Marchesa Canossa); another was an answer to Manzoni on *The Connection between Political Economy and Ethics*. He also addressed to Stapf a series of observations on *Ontologism*, and sent to press the first volume of *Minor Philosophical Treatises*, in which he laid down the first elements of that philosophy which stood clothed in light before his mind. The essays contained in the last-named work, though not originally intended to form one volume, breathe the unity of spirit which is to be found in the writings of an author who holds his principles firmly and constantly. Rosmini gives a brief sketch of the philosophy which, following in the footsteps

[1] See *Filosofia del Diritto*, published by Bertolotti, Intra, 1867.

of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, he had already traced out, and points out its two great features of unity and totality. He shows that error divides, whilst true philosophy aims at restoring unity by uniting men to God, and promoting their union amongst themselves by benevolence towards all. Such a philosophy is the outcome of the Gospel, and its practical application would make mankind one heart and one soul, one flock under one Shepherd.

Whilst hastening on the printing of the treatises, so that he might soon leave for Rovereto on account of the intense heat, an unexpected trial came upon him in the sudden death of his cousin Carlo, one whom he loved as a dear relative, a fellow-citizen, and a man of cultivated mind, but still more as the model of a Christian gentleman and a true friend whose loss he keenly felt. On the 20th of August he set out for Rovereto, but here another bereavement soon came to re-awaken the sorrow caused by his cousin's death. Maurizio Moschini was attacked by a chest disease, and in a short time reduced to a dying state. With the most touching charity and more than a brother's love did Father Rosmini strive to stay the fleeting life, but it was not God's will to grant his earnest prayer. His chief solace under this affliction was the sight of that beautiful soul, purified by suffering, leaving this world in perfect calm to meet the Heavenly Bridegroom. A strange, and indeed, wonderful circumstance occurred in connection with this death. Rosmini, who scarcely ever left the bedside of the dying youth, had been obliged to go to Trent on the 22nd of October, and on that very day it pleased God to take his dear friend to Himself. On the return journey, when, after walking a short distance, he was about to re-enter the carriage, he turned to his companion and with a shudder said, "Maurizio is dying." The other made light of it as a fancy, but Rosmini rejoined in a decided tone, "No, no, Maurizio has just died." When they reached Rovereto they found that Moschini had passed away at that very moment. It seemed as if his

beautiful soul, before quitting this world, had been permitted to say a last farewell and make known its departure to this faithful friend who bewailed his loss with heartfelt sorrow, and perpetuated the memory of Moschini by introducing him as the interlocutor in the philosophical dialogues of the *Rinnovamento*.[1]

The young priest whom he now employed as secretary was a very different character from Moschini. The Rev. Andrea Fenner, though good and pious, was by no means refined, and at times showed a touch of eccentricity. In November he and the faithful Bisoffi returned with Father Rosmini to Milan. The health of the latter had not improved during this sad vacation, and daily became worse; a troublesome cough, spitting of blood, sleeplessness, and indigestion at last compelled him to seek medical advice. Dr. Ramondini examined him and pronounced his lungs sound, but was of opinion that there were chronic ailments of a serious nature. He prescribed mercurial friction, frequent recourse to the waters of Recoaro, and above all complete rest from severe mental application. It was a great trial to the patient to find himself almost debarred from study; still he submitted, and relinquished the heaviest part of his work.

Whilst a prey to physical suffering, he seemed to soar more freely in spirit into the serene heights of thought. The eye of his mind seemed to measure the vast field of human knowledge strewn with imposing ruins, and he felt more than ever the necessity of restoring or rather reconstructing the edifice of science on a foundation of solid Christian philosophy. Another thought followed closely on this, or rather presented itself again; it was that in God's designs this restoration was to be effected by him. "What I am thinking of," he wrote in confidence to Tommaseo, "is principally to restore the ruins of philosophy by every means in my power, so that it may serve religion. It seems to me that Heaven calls me to do this work. I own it to

[1] *Rinnovamento*, published by Pogliani, Milan, 1840.

you, there is a voice within me which commands, and a power which compels me. . . . All philosophy is vain unless it be the handmaid of religion, unless it edify and humble us instead of puffing us up." In another letter, after having told him of his sickness, he says, "Oh, how good God is! Whilst He afflicts me corporally for my sins, He increases the vigour of my mind and, as it were, adds to my vital energy that I may be able to endure the punishment. In spite of my infirmities I am incessantly occupied with philosophical thoughts. Would that I could give them to the world without delay! What light would they not diffuse! What eye could fail to perceive their brightness! This at least is my thought. I cannot refrain from declaring this conviction to you; others might consider it an idle boast, and though I know well that I may be mistaken, yet I cannot banish the deep conviction that has taken possession of my mind."

Another idea besides the restoration of philosophy was now becoming more prominent than ever—the formation of the Institute of Charity. Since the day in December 1825 when the Institute had first presented itself to his mind like a beautiful and unexpected apparition, it had taken hold of his mind and his heart. The Marchesa Canossa was the first person to whom he had mentioned it, and she, after hearing his explanation of some few difficulties, ended by acknowledging it to be indeed the work of God. At her suggestion he had consulted Don Gasparo Bertoni, the learned and pious founder of the *Congregazione delle Stimmate*, and was consoled by hearing him say that it was a work *well adapted to the needs and circumstances of the times*. To consult the Vicar of Christ himself would have seemed as yet an act of presumption, so he turned to Capellari, who had been created cardinal in 1826, and placed the matter in that prelate's hands with words that seem prophetic: "I foresee that the affair will turn out to be more yours than mine." He continued to pray and get prayers, knowing, as he said, "that the Institute was a

fruit which could only be ripened by the sunshine of prayer." He was in no hurry to begin; on the contrary, he knew that everything might be lost by anticipating the time decreed by God. It was only in June 1827, when an event occurred, of which we shall speak presently, that, believing the hour had come, he girded himself to the task. His failing strength might well have made him feel unequal to any undertaking, yet the idea of the Institute only grew the clearer, and his confidence that it would be realised did but increase with the loss of human succour. Here are his words written to Count Giovanni Padulli, one of the few who were acquainted with his project. "For some time past I have been suffering from a liver complaint, and am constantly spitting blood, but by the grace of God I do not fear these ailments. On the contrary, I must own that I consider my infirmity the clearest proof that the proposed work will succeed: *Infirma mundi elegit Deus.* It is only too likely that a strong constitution might have made me self-reliant—human nature inclines so much that way; unhappy should I be if caught in that snare! But here I am, good for nothing, debarred from study—the only occupation to which I might have been attached—not permitted to talk, to read, or to write; now, indeed, I am a block of wood or stone out of which our Lord may carve whatever He pleases. If there were no other advantage in this precarious existence, the feeling that I have one foot in the grave makes it easier to watch as we are told to do, and increases the joy produced by the near approach of the Bridegroom. How fully this state makes us realise our own nothingness! We might else by some extraordinary delusion consider ourselves necessary to the Church of Jesus Christ, but sickness soon convinces us of our mistake. If I were to die without carrying out the work, it would not necessarily fail or be retarded. Perhaps by my death it might be hastened on and greatly increased! Am I not a hindrance? May it not be my sinfulness which prevents the abundance of the Divine mercy from

being poured out upon the Church? I have long since offered my life to God in union with the sacrifice of Jesus, and I renew my oblation each time I approach the altar, saying to the Heavenly Father that if it be necessary to throw this disobedient Jonas into the sea in order to quell the storm, I ask Him to cast me in without mercy. I do not know whether the Lord has accepted the victim, and if I confess my inmost conviction, I think He has not done so yet."

Thus, weak in body but full of confidence in God, Rosmini left Milan on the 18th of February 1828 to go to Calvario, Domodossola. While the weather was still cold, he left the warm rooms and moderate comforts of the town to shut himself up in an Alpine region, on a mountain-top, there to lead a life of poverty in a wretched and uncomfortable abode. To human judgment this was folly, or at least a strange whim; but he was led to that spot by God, whose ways are always wonderful.

CHAPTER X

ROSMINI AT CALVARIO—BEGINNING OF THE INSTITUTE OF CHARITY (1827–1828)

NEAR the little town of Domodossola, rising about 300 feet above the plain, stands, sentry-like, a somewhat cone-shaped hill. In former times it was known as the Matarella, from a fortified castle of that name on its summit, which, though half in ruins, still presents an imposing appearance. This place probably recalled to the minds of our ancestors scenes of bloodshed and violence, till religion purified it in the seventeenth century, by dedicating it to the Passion of Our Saviour under the title of Monte Calvario. Along the steep ascent little wayside chapels were erected, containing representations of the various scenes of the Passion, and not far from the top stood a chapel dedicated to the Annunciation of Our Lady, which was subsequently enlarged, with a small church annexed called the Holy House of Loreto, being built on the plan of the original Holy House at Loreto. Higher up an elegant church of octagonal form was erected, and dedicated to Christ crucified. It is lighted from the centre of the roof,[1] and the marble high altar stands in a recess, and there is a small chapel in the bays on either side. In one of these is a beautiful statue of Our Lady holding the Divine Infant, who eagerly stretches forward to embrace the cross borne towards Him by two angels; in the other is represented the taking down from the Cross. Later on a house was built for a rector, one of the canons of Domodossola, and later still additional accommodation for priests who might

[1] Behind the high altar there was formerly a large choir, now the Fathers' private oratory.

wish to spend a few days in retirement. When the Revolution at the close of the eighteenth century despoiled the Sacred Mount of nearly all its treasures, devotion to the spot waned and at length well-nigh disappeared; the house for retreats was untenanted, and became the haunt of bats, rats, and scorpions; the Sanctuary was neglected, and the resident Canon was the guardian of a mere ruin.

Such was Calvario when, in 1827, Father Rosmini took up his abode there.

A visitor to Calvario at the present day can have no idea of what it was then, for the work of restoration begun by him has been carried on by his successors. The late lamented Father-General Lanzoni altered and enlarged the house, added new buildings, and obtained an abundant supply of good water; acquired additional land, which he planted with a great variety of trees, &c.; laid out flower-beds and shady walks, &c.; changed it, in fact, into an earthly paradise.

It may be asked why Rosmini decided to go to Calvario. Why did he give up his studies and shut himself up in a mountain-dwelling while still in ailing health? If his object was to withdraw from the world and draw near to God in solitude, why not have chosen a milder climate, or a less rigorous season? In order to answer these questions, we must go back a little.

On the 8th of June 1827, a Friday, Father Rosmini, then at Milan, went to dine with Count Mellerio, and met for the first time a foreign priest. The stranger was about thirty years of age, a man of strong build, with florid complexion, light hair, and large restless eyes; he spoke in French with great animation; his words, his glance, and the expression of his countenance displayed an ardent temperament, in striking contrast to the calm self-possession of our Abate. Dinner over, Rosmini's new acquaintance drew him aside and without ceremony said, "Signor Abate, I am thinking of founding a society for the improvement of the clergy. You must lend me a hand." Father Rosmini replied that he, too, had for some time had in view the foundation of

a religious society, formed on the two principles which were the rule of his own life, and that from these he could not deviate. He then went on to explain the two principles of passivity: (1) to correct our own faults, avoiding any anxious solicitude for the improvement of others, through a consciousness of our own powerlessness; (2) not to refuse our services when an opportunity is presented to us by the Providence of God, which can do all things. In haste to begin, the stranger, perhaps convinced of the beauty of these principles, or thinking that Rosmini was not a man to be easily moved, answered that he was quite of his opinion, and felt as he did on these points. This brief conversation united the two priests in thought and affection on their first meeting, and sowed the seed of the Institute of Charity. The next day they went together to the Certosa of Pavia, and returned still more convinced that their union was willed by God. It was necessary for them now to choose a retired spot, where they could prepare themselves in spirit and wait in silence for the voice of the Lord. One day Don Luigi Polidori, who lived with Count Mellerio, and had been to the Church of St. Celsus to say Mass at the celebrated Altar of Our Lady, came full of joy to Rosmini, saying that during the Holy Sacrifice he had received an interior suggestion that the Sacro Monte Calvario near Domodossola was the place.[1] This thought of Don Polidori's would appear to have been a heaven-sent inspiration, for nothing could have pleased Mellerio better than to see the little plant of the Institute flourish in his native place, while the strange priest saw that the neighbouring Protestant Cantons of Switzerland would afford a field for his zealous labours. Antonio Rosmini himself was best pleased of all, because he had always wished the Passion of Our Divine Redeemer to be the chief devotion of the Society, and in the proposed arrangement he saw the fulfilment of the wish, or rather of the prediction, of the

[1] It was on 13th June 1827, the Feast of Rosmini's patron, St. Anthony of Padua.

Ven. Maddalena Canossa, that the Institute of Charity should spring up on Calvary between Jesus Crucified and Mary of Sorrows. But first of all it was necessary to visit the place and find a lodging. This the stranger offered to do, as he was stronger, less pressed for time, and anxious to begin at once.

The reader will like to know who this priest was, and what had brought him to Milan. Giovanni Lowenbruck was a young missionary priest from Kemplich in Lorraine. As early as 1819 he had planned a work to save from contamination and infidelity the French and German workmen who flocked to Paris in search of employment. In 1822 he went to Paris without money or influence, and full of zeal, began his undertaking. Three workmen, his first recruits, were soon joined by others to the number of forty, and in a few years they were as many as three hundred. Private benefactors assisted him at first, and afterwards, with the aid afforded by the Council and the Government, he succeeded in doing a great deal amongst the poor people. Some ill-disposed persons soon tried to arouse opposition by circulating false and malignant reports. In 1826, whilst he was preaching a mission at Rouen, a handful of roughs from Paris stirred up the crowd and created a riot; the church was filled with yells and blasphemies, and Lowenbruck, driven into a corner, was only rescued by the interference of a butcher, who pretended to kill him, and so saved him from the infuriated mob. The following year he went to Turin with Count Senfft-Pilsach, the Austrian minister at the Court of Sardinia, who gave him a letter of introduction to Count Mellerio at Milan, and there he met Father Rosmini as we have seen. It would appear that some imprudent act due to his impulsive temperament, and certain pecuniary embarrassments—for economy was not his strong point—had made it necessary for him to leave France. However that may have been, the hand of Providence, which directs all things, lovingly guided the course of events towards the fulfilment of a design pre-ordained from the beginning.

After the interview recorded above Lowenbruck returned to Turin, and having obtained permission from Cardinal Morozzo, Bishop of Novara, to live in the house for retreats at Monte Calvario, hastened thither, and wrote to Father Rosmini, urging him to join him without delay. The latter, realising the vastness of the enterprise, feared that hurry would ruin everything, and therefore wrote a detailed description of the Institute to Lowenbruck, to be meditated upon in the presence of God. Not doubting his sincerity, he at the same time praised his zeal, and humbly accused himself of a want of ardour. He recommended his companion to exercise patience, long-suffering, diffidence in self and confidence in God, warning him not to indulge in extravagant hopes, nor to take for an accomplished fact that which was as yet only an idea, or at most a desire. They would meet at Calvario, he said, on Ash Wednesday, February 20, 1828, to ask counsel of God in fasting and prayer, and to write the Constitutions *juxta exemplar quod in monte monstratum erit.* Meanwhile he would despatch some business in the Tyrol, and Father Lowenbruck could set the house in order, while learning Italian at Calvario. Towards the end of July 1827, before starting for the Tyrol, Rosmini paid a visit to his friend in order to see the place himself and come to terms with Canon Remigio Capis, the Rector of the Sacred Mount; the conditions of the lease, however, were not finally settled until the following year.

Lowenbruck remained at Calvario with Brother Peter, a Franciscan who had belonged to one of the monasteries suppressed at the Revolution. With a few thousand francs left by Father Rosmini for the purpose, he began to repair the house according to the rules of poverty given to him, and furnish the poor rooms rented from the Canon. Judge Chiossi, a cousin of Mellerio's, assisted him, and provided the money as required, Lowenbruck being but an indifferent manager in pecuniary affairs. Rosmini asked permission of the Bishop of Trent to leave the diocese as

soon as he had concluded his business at Rovereto. Mgr. Luschin had wished to make him a parish priest or director of the seminary, but on hearing that he felt called by God to reform philosophical studies in the interests of religion, and to establish the Institute of Charity, he left him free to follow his vocation.

It was, as we have seen, in November 1827 that Father Rosmini returned to Milan, where he remained till the 18th of February 1828, and then set out for Calvario with Fenner and Bisoffi. The clouded sky, the stillness of the air, the snow falling in great flakes during the journey to Domodossola, all seemed to dispose the mind for gloomy thoughts of the solitude. They spent the night at Domodossola, and next morning ascended the Sacro Monte, to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice on the spot which appeared to Antonio Rosmini so appropriate. By this time the sky was clear, and the crisp, bracing air, so like that of his native mountains, the genial welcome of the Canon, and the simplicity of the rough but kindly Fra Pietro, lent a charm to the new abode. The one thing which would have been most appreciated, however, was wanting; and that was the presence of the companion who was to have spent with him the holy season of Lent in prayer and in drawing up the Constitutions of the Institute. The ardent Lorrainese priest had no sooner made the little house habitable than he hastened across the Alps once more, to arrange some business matters of his own in France. On arriving he wrote to Father Rosmini about his embarrassments, and received from Milan a reply full of brotherly affection, encouraging him to bear this cross with resignation, and reminding him of the promise to be at Calvario on February 20th. On his arrival at Calvario Rosmini wrote at once the following beautiful letter, which we give in its entirety :—

"Here I am, dear friend and beloved brother in Christ, awaiting you on the spot. I am beforehand with you, and am almost pleased with myself at having for once outstripped you in diligence, a virtue in which you are

usually so far beyond me. Come, fly, I am longing to embrace you. We will pass the forty days in the desert in memory of the time spent there for us by our Divine Master. Temptations will follow, but prayer and fasting will have strengthened us to overcome them. He who was God, and yet allowed Himself to be tempted, has overcome them all. He willed it to be so in order to conquer all temptations by His victory. *Confortare et esto robustus, accinge lumbos tuos.* Now is the time; the moments are in the hands of God, and they come when He wills. I am here, and our compact still holds good. *Qui misit manum ad aratrum,* &c. These few words are enough; let us not yield before the battle has begun, but let us persevere to the end. Love me in the Lord, to whom be glory for ever."

No reply came. After some days he wrote again in the same affectionate strain, but with no better result. Thus, after sending this priest to induce Father Rosmini to quit a retirement, which to outsiders seemed mere inactivity, Providence suddenly withdrew him at the critical moment, so that Rosmini might leave us a sublime example of self-abnegation, of perfect confidence in God, and of invincible constancy in a good work begun for His sake.

Lent passed, and he was still alone on the mount. Solitude, the mother of holy thoughts, could not be unpleasing to him, for it had been the desire of his heart from childhood; but the solitude of Calvary in its stern reality was for many reasons hard to nature. Here, instead of the comforts of his own home, was a poor dwelling barely habitable, a miserable room not more than nine feet square, furnished with a writing table and two chairs of common rough wood, and a sack of beech leaves for a bed. The choice viands served up in his father's house or in the houses of Milanese nobles were exchanged for the scanty and uninviting results of the attempts at cookery made by Bisoffi and Fra Pietro; the delightful and learned conversation with Tommaseo, Mellerio, and Manzoni was succeeded by intercourse with the Canon and Fenner—

both good priests, it is true, but little else—and the two lay-brothers, one as simple as the other. Add to this the disappointment of not finding the companion who had urged him to come, and who had now deserted him; the sense of dread awakened by the prospect of a future stretching out indefinitely before him like the ocean on a dark night; and it will be easy to understand how he could write of the life that it was "hard at first" and undertaken "by nature with much reluctance." Nevertheless, he remained steadfast at his post; with a courage that might have appeared rashness in his state of health, he entered on the Lent, determined to observe it rigorously in memory of Christ's fast in the desert. Considering Calvario as a spot prepared for him by the mercy of God, where he might probe "the depth and darkness of his wounds" in the light of eternal truth, and wash away "his iniquities" in the Blood of Jesus Crucified and in the tears of Our Lady of Sorrows, he devoted himself to renewing in his heart a pure desire of justice, and prayed incessantly that the Divine Will might be accomplished. Thus did he prepare himself for the graces with which God favours His loved ones. The Divine Goodness did indeed flood his mind with light and his heart with consolations, while even his enfeebled frame was gifted with unexpected vigour.

A signal proof of the light bestowed on him by God at this time is to be found in the *Constitutions of the Institute of Charity*, which he began to write in the early days of Lent; a marvellous work, sufficient of itself to prove Antonio Rosmini's greatness of soul. The idea of the Institute had first flashed upon his mind in the December of 1825, and at a glance he had taken in the whole plan of his work. Now it became necessary to commit it to writing, to define clearly the nature of the Institute, to point out its end and the means of attaining it, to show how it resembled other Religious orders and how it differed from them, to lay down the leading laws of its government, and to deduce from them the subordinate regulations, down to the most

minute rules of conduct, that were to direct the actions of the individual members. This was the laborious task to which he devoted himself during Lent, studying the Constitutions of the ancient and modern Orders. He completed the work on the 23rd of April.

It pleased God to comfort his soul with spiritual sweetness at this time, as we gather from his letters. He writes to a friend, "I cannot find words to thank Our Lord for His goodness to me. My soul has need of this recollection within itself. How delightful is this quiet! The holy Fathers rightly compared solitude to Paradise, for it is the abode of God and of His angels." Again to the same he writes, "Solitude is dear to me because it immerses me in profound thoughts, and gathers round me a society superior to the company of men. It is not that these mountains, these valleys, this peace and silence have taken possession of my heart. Material places are all too narrow for us; our abode is God." Even the absence of his companion, however disappointing, did not disturb his peace. "What God has ordained *a constitutione mundi*," he writes, "is alone desirable, and it is the only good, whatever we may think, for we understand but little of the distinction between good and evil, therefore I am not only at peace regarding the delay of my French friend, but satisfied." This interior peace helped to re-establish his health more than the medicinal waters or mercurial friction, and he was able to fast the whole of Lent, and observe the abstinence strictly even on Sundays, so that he writes in a playful strain to his mother, "Lent passed off very well. I had not expected so much from my digestion. But I think it is only right to give part of the credit to the cook, who knew so well what to serve it with." This clever cook, it is worth recording, was no other than Bisoffi, who would certainly have let himself be cut to pieces for his master if necessary, but was so limited in his ideas and so extremely simple that he used to think every stream they encountered in their journeys was the Adige.

The days passed peacefully on, and with spring the mountains and valleys began to be clothed with verdure; the joys of Easter succeeded to Lenten gloom; everything seemed to speak of joy, yet the hour of rejoicing for our beloved Father had not yet come. The French Abbé did not put in an appearance; letter after letter, despatched by different routes in order to insure delivery, all equally failed to elicit a word of reply. Strange and contradictory reports concerning his movements reached Calvario; some said he had joined the Jesuits; others thought he was in money difficulties; it was stated that he was preaching the Lent at Montpellier; but all agreed that he had little or no intention of returning to Calvario. Rumours quite as strange were spread concerning Rosmini himself. Some, wondering that a rich and talented man should take it into his head to go and live on vegetarian diet in a mountain solitude, concluded that over-study had affected his mind, and that his resolution was the result of religious mania; whilst a few, who had heard a whisper of the plan agreed on with Lowenbruck, pitied the philosopher for his incautious reliance on the sharp-witted foreigner. Even amongst wise and benevolent people his resolve met with disapproval. Tommaseo wrote, "No doubt the salvation of one's soul must be the great object of our every action; but how do you know that Our Lord would not be better pleased with a form of suffering that would tax your strength less, and be at the same time more meritorious, more active, more edifying, and more like your former virtuous life?" Father Rosmini let them all have their say and went on. The sneers of the world did not trouble him, or rather, he was glad to be accounted a fool for Christ's sake: the delay of the French Abbé did not disturb him, for his confidence was not in man, and something made him feel sure that he would eventually return. To Tommaseo, who addressed him in the accents of friendship, he replied, "My decision is, to allow myself to be guided by Providence, and to make no change without necessity and reason, but to listen for

the voice of the Lord. . . . I believe there is a time for all things; in any case the foundation comes first and the building afterwards. If nothing else can be done, charity first and science after, for knowledge *shall be destroyed* but charity never falleth away."

It must not be thought that Calvario made him such a recluse as to close his heart to natural affection, or withdraw him altogether from study and external acts of charity. His thoughts were often with those dear to him, and his loving intercourse with them by letter has in it less of the philosopher than of the ascetic, living far from the world in a heavenly atmosphere. When the *Constitutions* were finished, he wrote the *Etiquette of Literary Men*[1] in answer to Gioia, gave the finishing touch to the second volume of the *Minor Philosophical Treatises*, sent Fenner to Milan to get it printed, and began the essay on *The Origin of Ideas*. He found occasion for the exercise of charity in the neglected Sanctuary, for pilgrims once more began to arrive, and he willingly devoted himself to hearing their confessions. Two Calvinists from the neighbouring Canton of Vaud came to him for instruction, which he gladly gave them; and after having received their abjuration, he invited them to a little homely feast at Calvario. He still continued to direct them, and prepared them for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

We must not omit to mention another work of charity, apparently an intellectual one, which might have had very weighty results if it had proved successful. Going to Novara in June to pay his respects to Cardinal Morozzo, he went on to Turin. Here he was told that the Abbé Lamennais was staying with Count Senfft, and wished to make the acquaintance of the author of the *Opuscoli Filosofici*, the first volume of which he had read. Father Rosmini called upon him, and they conversed for two hours on the theory that the common consent of men—*consenso commune*

[1] *Galateo dei Letterati*, published in the *Opuscoli Filosofici*. Pogliani, Milan, 1828; Sartori, Ancona, 1830.

—is the criterion of truth. At first our Father put his objections gently, as though he were not sure of the Abbé's meaning, but when he saw it clearly he plied him with such strong arguments that there was no escape. Lamennais, whilst confessing that he had not studied the great metaphysicians very deeply, begged Rosmini to carry on the discussion privately by letter, to which he consented fearing, however, that little would result from this, as De Lamennais had been very heated over the question. On his return to Calvario, Father Rosmini opened the correspondence without delay, but received a very curt reply, for Lamennais said that the evils threatening the Church in France compelled him to return, and left him no leisure to enter into philosophical discussions. There the matter ended. The Breton was then at the zenith of his renown. Who would have thought that it would so soon have faded, and that the ardent defender of Papal rights would have fallen into apostasy, and died without the consolations of religion! Antonio Rosmini had left him with sad forebodings even at their first interview, and had remarked to Mellerio on his return from Turin, "That man fills me with alarm. He is ruled by pride: I fear he will fall." These were prophetic words. Nearly nine years later he wrote to the misguided Abbé, not in cold philosophical language, but with the affectionate words of a friend and a brother, entreating him to return to the Church he had abandoned; but the letter remained unanswered.

Father Rosmini had not long regained his solitude, when it pleased Our Lord to reward his protracted and patient waiting. On the 30th of May a letter had arrived from the Abbé Lowenbruck, with the assurance that he had not changed his resolution, but could not tell how soon he should be at Calvario. When he actually arrived on the 8th of July, his friend was so pleased to see him that the five months' painful uncertainty was quite forgotten. Rosmini could not remain with him as long as he would have wished, for the old ailments, which had ceased almost miraculously

during Lent, reasserted themselves in an aggravated form as soon as he gave himself to study, and obliged him to have recourse once more to the waters prescribed by Ramondini. He had to return also to renew the passport granted him by the Austrian Government, the term having now expired. So after some instructions to his companion, having agreed on a permanent lease with the Canon, he left Calvario on the 28th of July. He spent three weeks at Recoaro, and went on to Rovereto on the 28th of August, intending to visit Rome in the autumn.

Meanwhile things were going on well at Calvario. The news of Lowenbruck's return soon spread, and crowds flocked to the Sanctuary for confession, where the good priest, in spite of his imperfect Italian, which he eked out by the aid of a little pocket dictionary, succeeded in sending them away full of peace and consolation. Strangers from Switzerland would sometimes arrive, and then the zealous Father, who spoke French and German fluently, was more at home, and received several Protestants into the Church. Sick calls were numerous, and he was unflagging in his ministrations to the suffering poor. The little family increased also by the addition of a layman, Isaias Masone, and a cleric from Domodossola, Giacomo Molinari, a good young man, though rather delicate, who had been sent to Lowenbruck by the Bishop of Novara for his sacred studies. Admiring our missionary's indefatigable zeal, the Bishop had, moreover, ventured to give him the spiritual care of some poor Savoyard prisoners at Pallanza on the Lago Maggiore, so that Lowenbruck also went there occasionally, making no account of the difficult twenty miles' journey, to comfort these poor creatures by instructions given in their native tongue. As if this were a mere nothing, he applied himself to improving the house, mending here, restoring there, or adding a new wall, and readily employing his own muscular arms in the work to make the dwelling fit for future companions, or for ecclesiastics, who even now came occasionally to make a quiet retreat. In fact, short

as the time had been since his return, things had moved forward wonderfully. Father Rosmini, although at a distance, contributed to this success more than might be supposed, and he was always at Calvario in spirit. Besides furnishing his companion with books and money, he assisted him by wise counsel. He knew how much the Abbé's former life and natural disposition would incline him to exterior occupations, and he frequently urged him to attend to the interior life, since "no man is secure in appearing abroad, but he who would willingly lie hid at home." Seeing that his friend's lively imagination, too, made everything appear in the brightest colours, and led him to build great hopes on the future, Father Rosmini proposed that they should both adopt what he calls a *State maxim*, viz., "To be content with the present, in which we can possess Our Lord who is our all, and not to trouble ourselves about the future."

Fearing that in the fervour of his zeal Father Lowenbruck would overwork himself, he writes, "I beg and entreat of you, and if I might I would command you, not to be in want of anything." Above all, this tender Father desired that charity should reign in the little family, that all should esteem one another as children of God, see Jesus Christ in each member, and venerate in him the character of Baptism and the sanctity produced by the reception of the Sacraments. He besought Lowenbruck, as Superior, to draw closer day by day the bonds of charity, so that all might love each other in Jesus Christ, with mutual forbearance supporting one another and forgetting self for the sake of others. These words of light were welcomed and laid to heart by his companion.

On the 7th of November, Rosmini started with Bisoffi for Milan, where Andrea Fenner, his secretary, awaited him, and on the 22nd they proceeded to Rome. This was his second visit to the Eternal City, which he had first entered with the Patriarch of Venice, Mgr. Pyrrker; now he was in humbler company, but the object of his journey was a far

higher one than on the former occasion. The doctors, as well as his family, considered that the weakness of his chest required a milder climate, and this plea secured him a passport from the Austrian Government. Another good reason, though not his chief motive, was that he might begin at Rome, under the *ægis* of the supreme authority, the exposition of that philosophy which he intended to set forth, not as a novelty, but as the restoration of the one true and traditional philosophy, that had fallen with scholasticism and, so far, had never revived. His most important motive was to consult the Holy See with regard to the Institute, for the seed now sown could never develop, or even live, except under the shadow of the See of Peter. Ever since 1826 he had contemplated a visit to Rome, and he had been on the point of going there with the Marchesa Canossa. He felt this necessity yet more strongly in 1827, when he wrote to Lowenbruck that he wished to begin the work with the blessing of the Holy Father, that the Institute might from its first establishment be closely united with the Head of the Church. But when Providence led him to Calvary, and he had written the Constitutions of the Society which began to grow up in obscurity and poverty at the foot of the cross, an interior impulse urged him on and forced him to exclaim, " I am impelled forward, without knowing whither." It was the Spirit of God admonishing him that the time to work had come. Cardinals Zurla and Cappellari, who had been informed of everything, had for some time entreated him to undertake this journey. He went to Rome, therefore, persuaded that it was God's Will; he went to consult the oracle which alone could assure him that he was moved by the Spirit of God.

CHAPTER XI

HIS STAY AT ROME FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE INSTITUTE AND FOR THE RESTORATION OF PHILOSOPHY (1828–1830)

Our travellers reached Rome on the 28th of November towards evening, and at the first sight of the cupola of St. Peter's gilded by the setting sun, they recited the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving. They went that night to the Monastery of the Holy Apostles, where Father Orioli—shortly afterwards created Cardinal—was Superior; and there they occupied the plain, simple apartments engaged for them by Giovanni Padulli. Next morning Father Rosmini called on Cardinals Cappellari and Zurla, who welcomed him most cordially. The first few days were spent in paying visits, his chief pleasure being found in devoutly going to various shrines with Count Padulli and his sons; after this, he retired to his little cell, resolved to take no step until God was pleased to make known to him what he was to do. He was afraid of interfering with the Divine work by taking the initiative; therefore he remained in the retirement of his cell patiently praying, and also asking the prayers of others in the humble accents of a beggar imploring an alms. "Pray for me," he wrote to Bassic, "I feel my needs, like a man preparing for battle." He urged Father Lowenbruck to pray also for grace to act according to truth, not "with the leaven of human passion." He also begged him to unite patience with prayer, finding that his lively imagination made him anxious to visit Rome without delay, thinking that he could bring matters to a conclusion in no time. Meanwhile, Father Rosmini set to work at the treatise on *The Origin of Ideas*

which he had begun at Calvario, hoping to get it printed and published in Rome, for it seemed fitting that the philosophy which was intended to infuse a new and Christian life into the sciences, more or less tainted by infidelity, should first see the light under the eyes of the Supreme Pastor of the Church.

From the beginning, the affair of the Institute started well and seemed to be going full sail. Leo XII., already prepossessed by Cardinal Cappellari's account, declared himself favourable, and as soon as he heard that Antonio Rosmini was in Rome, expressed a wish to see him. Another fact which helped to render the Holy See favourable was that the Marchesa Canossa had urged Father Rosmini to found the Institute of Charity. She was in Rome at the time, and had obtained approval of her own Rule with extraordinary dispatch. We need hardly say that Cappellari himself took the matter to heart, and not being able personally to examine the *Constitutions* of the Institute, sent the Founder two able theologians, Father Giovanluca, a Passionist, and Father Cesarini, an Oratorian, to confer with him, and they entered exactly into his ideas. Suddenly, all came to a standstill; the Pope was seized with fever on the 6th of February 1829, and on the 10th he expired.[1] Rosmini, who had so much reason to hope for great things at the Holy Father's hands, bowed his head in reverent submission to the Divine will. "To-day the Holy Father has died," he wrote to Lowenbruck. "I cannot tell you how good he was to me, but it is the will of God. May He be blessed! Let us remain tranquil in the Lord, entirely resigned in His hands." And again he writes, "Let us wait in faith; *sustine Dominum*. Our Lord has no better

[1] It is a well-known fact that in December 1823 Leo XII. was so seriously ill that his life was despaired of. At his desire Mgr. Strambi, Bishop of Macerata, was then summoned to Rome; he came in haste, and assured the Holy Father that he would recover, adding that he had offered his own useless life in exchange for the precious life of his Holiness. On the following day Strambi died, and the Pope arose from his sick bed.

means of instructing men than by making them wait. Oh, how much does that man know who has learnt how to wait!" The event proved his wisdom, for what had seemed a misfortune to the Institute turned out, by the disposition of God, to be for its good. Cardinal Morozzo came to Rome for the election of the new Pontiff, and spoke very highly of the little Institute at Calvario, which had sprung up under his own eyes; and when the new Pope was elected, he spoke in the same terms to him. Cardinal Cappellari, too, with his usual goodness, said to Rosmini when he was entering the Conclave, "I have got your memorandum about the Institute with me, and I shall give it to others in there to read." There were thus good grounds for hope. On the 31st of March, Cardinal Castiglione was elected Pope. He was a learned and prudent man, who knew the needs of the time, was a great lover of justice, and had once been playfully and prophetically greeted by Pius VII. as "Your Holiness, Pius VIII." The new Pope was welcomed by all with joy, though his age and infirmities did not promise a long pontificate. Father Rosmini knew him personally and was aware of his friendship with Count Mellerio, so that, had he been led by human prudence, there were easy and pleasant ways open to him. But the holy man detested worldly plans, and calmly "waited for the Lord." In the meantime he was much consoled to find that those whom he consulted on the subject of the Institute, were unanimous in affirming that his inspiration was from on high, and would be realised sooner or later. It was not long, however, before he was summoned to the desired audience. The day fixed—the 15th of May—was indeed memorable in Rosmini's life, for it placed the authoritative seal of the Vicar of Christ on his mission as a writer and as founder of a religious Order.

Cardinal Cappellari, who had introduced him to Pius VII., also presented him to Pius VIII. The Holy Father received him in the most kind and gracious manner, accepted the books he presented, and began to converse about them,

showing that they were not new to him. Then, in a tone of gentle authority, he added, "God wills that you should devote yourself to writing books: that is your vocation. You have a good grasp of logic, and at the present time the Church needs writers who can make themselves feared. If men are to be influenced nowadays, it will be by employing reason to lead them to religion. Be assured that you will do more for the good of your neighbour by this than by any other work of the sacred ministry." After insisting for some time on the necessity of leading men "by way of the intellect," he took up a book lying on the table, and pointed out an article by an anonymous author, praised its vigorous reasoning, and remarked that in our days men should write in that way. The Pope asked if he knew the article in question, the *Galateo dei Letterati*, and perceiving from his embarrassment that he was the writer, the Holy Father, pleased with the discovery, said kindly, "We have read it through." Going on to speak of the Institute, His Holiness said, "If you intend to begin in a small way and leave the rest to Our Lord, we give our approval, and are pleased that you should do so. But if you contemplate a great undertaking, we think it would not do. We are not now speaking as Vicar, though unworthy, of Jesus Christ, but solely taking into account the times and the circumstances in which we live." The Sovereign Pontiff then adduced the example of a religious Congregation which had done a great deal of good in a restricted sphere of action, but had failed when it attempted greater things. He insisted on the necessity of beginning with what is least, and leaving it to God to give the increase. The words of the Holy Father seemed to Rosmini full of the Spirit of God and of heavenly wisdom, while they expressed his own inmost feelings on the point. He therefore replied, "Holy Father, I can assure you that I have never thought of beginning with great things, but with something quite insignificant; my vocation is not extraordinary, like that of St. Ignatius, but most ordinary; my only reason for

having recourse to your Holiness is to ascertain whether I am on the right path or not; and consequently whether I am to go on or to turn back." The Pope answered, "You are in the right path, and may go on as we have said—that is, beginning in a small way, and leaving Our Lord to do His will, for if the work is from Him, He will not fail to bless it." Then, at Father Rosmini's request, the Pope with great benignity blessed both him and his companions at Calvario, as also the friends and benefactors of his work, and bade him farewell with apostolic charity. Rosmini left this audience full of holy consolation, as if in the words of the Holy Father he had heard the voice of God. So far as his studies were concerned, the words of the Pontiff were a command rather than a counsel; and he made haste to despatch the printing of the *Nuovo Saggio*. With respect to the Institute, he was more than content to know that he was on the right way. He wrote at once to communicate his joy to Father Lowenbruck and to inspire him with constancy, not forgetting, however, to warn him of the dangers into which he might be led by unbridled imagination and indiscreet zeal. For his own part he indulged in no illusions about the future, bright as were the promises at that moment; he knew that a verbal approval was a very different thing from a formal approbation, which would be opposed by the enemy of all good, and, on account of its serious nature, must be a matter of time. Could he have followed his own desires he would have returned to Calvario without further delay, but Cardinal Cappellari strongly advised him not to leave Rome until he had prepared a compendium of the *Constitutions* to be presented to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. As this delay would enable him to get the *Nuovo Saggio* printed, he decided to remain.

Towards the middle of July, he exchanged the heat of Rome for the cool and refreshing breezes of Albano, and there he spent a month with the Padulli family. During this time he composed for the *Accademia di Religione* a dis-

course against the errors of Benjamin Constant [1] and another against the Sansimonians, both of which were published some years later under the title of *Fragments of a History of Infidelity*. On the 17th of August, after a few days spent at Rome, he went, according to the advice of his doctor, to try sea-bathing at Naples, attracted, as he said, more by the society of the Padullis than by considerations of health. An incident of this journey is worth recording as a proof of the loving care of Providence for His servant. They stopped on their way at some little village, and spent the night at a poor inn, where the Father and Count Padulli shared the same room. His companion having gone to bed, Rosmini sat up to say his Matins. Towards midnight he perceived that a portion of the wall opposite him began to move very, very quietly, a panel was slipped aside, and an opening appeared, through which he could plainly see an eye watching him. Soon, however, the panel glided back to its place, but the Father did not go to bed. He woke his companion, and as soon as it was daylight they hastened to leave the inn as quietly as possible, thanking God that they had been preserved. No one who knows what the state of the country was at that time will think lightly of the danger, for brigands infested Italy, and often took the lives of travellers as well as their goods.

On the 12th of September they returned to Rome, and the Padullis soon left for Milan. How gladly would he have gone with them on his way to Calvario, but as yet such was not God's will. The news he received from his little community caused him to bless God. Father Lowenbruck was the life of the place; he was assiduous in the confessional, taught the catechism to the people, gave a course of theology to Molinari and two other clerics sent him by Cardinal Morozzo, instructed Protestants, and went down to Pallanza occasionally to console the poor prisoners and encourage them to reform their lives. He was invited to give missions to the country people, and first visited for this purpose

[1] Published in the *Apologetica*. Pogliani, Milan, 1840.

Maccugnaga at the foot of Monte Rosa, where the people spoke a half-German dialect; then Aosta and other places, where his words, which came straight from the heart, stirred up the people to a better life. His zeal was not always well directed, it is true, but when occasion required, Father Rosmini would charitably write to point out the fault to him, and his remonstrances were never disregarded.

But God, who usually trains the souls of those dear to Him in the school of tribulation, was now preparing a great trial for Rosmini when he least expected it. A letter arrived one day from Father Lowenbruck, saying that in October he intended to go to France to settle an old debt with some small sums still owing to him there and the money he might receive for preaching during Advent and Lent; he hoped to be at Calvario again by Easter. We can easily imagine the good Father's feelings at this announcement. Lowenbruck was the only one on whom he could count for his little Society, and what would become of the good works so happily begun, if he should go away? What would be the fate of the seed, only just sown? Certainly, he promised to return when his affairs were settled, but he was so restless, imaginative, and changeable that it was impossible to say whether he would come back or no. Father Rosmini, sorely grieved, but yet tranquil, wrote and begged him to declare his intentions plainly. Was this step a pretext for leaving the Society? He must arrange matters as best he could and then follow the dictates of his conscience. A little later, fearing that the projected departure was a suggestion of the evil one, he wrote again to represent the consequences which might ensue, the obstacles it would place in the way of God's work, the commotion it would cause in the Ossola, the displeasure of Count Mellerio and of the Cardinal. He suggested some means of escaping from the dilemma, and even, as a last resource, the acceptance of a loan offered by Mellerio to satisfy his importunate creditor. But Lowenbruck was not moved by these remonstrances. He

still hesitated, and kept Rosmini in suspense. Just at this time, however, the parish priest of Formazza died, and the people of that little Alpine village near the glaciers in the valley of Toce, entreated him to come to their assistance. As they spoke a half-German dialect, the Abbé, with his generous spirit and iron constitution, accepted the invitation, and despite the severity of the weather and the inconveniences of the journey, set off to exercise his zeal, to the great joy and admiration of the Cardinal, of Count Mellerio, and Father Rosmini, who thanked God for this satisfactory change. The interior trial which this suspense had caused Father Rosmini was followed by an attack of small-pox. Relying too much on the improvement in his health after his stay at Naples and Albano, he had devoted the hour after dinner to translating the Psalms into Italian, an attempt which soon brought on an attack of fever, and in October he was confined to his bed, but only for a few days. He playfully wrote to a friend, that it left him, as if in spite, with his face as rugged as a piece of rustic architecture. The brother infirmarian exclaimed, on seeing him, " Why, Father, you are gone back to your childhood. I am sure you are marked with small-pox." And so he was, though the attack was slight.

Whilst he was ill, God was pleased to sweeten his trial by sending him a young Roman lawyer not yet thirty years of age, of a good, though by no means a wealthy family, who was destined soon to join him. This young man, after his first triumphs at the bar, becoming dissatisfied with his profession, took up the study of languages, and by teaching Italian to foreigners in Rome, earned a competence for himself and his family. An attachment to a young English lady, which resulted in disappointment, led him to think of leaving the world and giving himself up to the pursuit of perfection in the Society of Jesus. Just as he was about to enter that order he was attacked by ague, which returned each time he resolved to try his vocation amongst the Jesuits. Then it was that, having heard of

Antonio Rosmini and his Society, he felt a great desire to make his acquaintance, and from the first he was drawn to him by an attraction not of this world. The more the young man saw of Rosmini, the deeper became his reverence for him, and he soon decided to join him. One day, therefore, he cast himself at his feet to ask help from him, so that he might leave his home and resume the theological studies he had already begun at the Roman College. The Father replied that all his fortune was now consecrated to his little Society at Calvario, and could not be otherwise disposed of, but that if his young friend's inclination towards the Society had become a real resolve, he could provide the funds necessary. A few days passed and then he returned, declaring joyfully that he was resolved to be one of the little family at Calvario. Father Rosmini, whilst receiving him as a member, did not think it advisable to send him at once to the Sacro Monte. Thanks to the good offices of Cardinal Cappellari, however, he secured his admission into the Irish College, where he paid the fees for the remainder of his theological course and his preparation for Holy Orders, while he ascertained more clearly whether his vocation was really from God. This young man was Luigi Gentili; we shall soon see him rejoin his benefactor and father at Calvario, and later on become an apostle in England, where he brought back hundreds of stray sheep to the fold of Christ.

As soon as he had recovered from the small-pox, Father Rosmini devoted himself once more to the printing of the "New Essay" (*Nuovo Saggio*), wishing, before he left Rome, to present the Holy Father with a copy. This was a matter of time, and while waiting, he published the *Maxims of Christian Perfection*,[1] a thoroughly Rosminian treatise. The introductory chapter gives a clear idea of what is meant by Christian perfection, which consists in

[1] *Massime di Perfezione Cristiana*, published in the *Ascetica*. Pogliani, Milan, 1840. Translated into English by Canon W. A. Johnson. 4th English Edition, Burns & Oates, London, 1888.

perfect charity, viz., the observance of the twofold precept of the love of God and of our neighbour. This charity, when it leads the Christian to the practice of the evangelical counsels, constitutes religious perfection. But charity must be orderly, and hence Father Rosmini divides his maxims into two classes, three having reference to the end and three to the means.

These six maxims, properly understood, correspond to the six petitions of the Lord's Prayer; and as the Lord's Prayer has been termed the abridgment of the Gospel, so likewise these six maxims may be looked upon as a compendium of the Gospel teaching with regard to perfection. This little book, though simple in style, brings new light to the mind as often as it is read, and when meditated upon gives to the soul an increase of heavenly strength and peace. Here the fundamental principles of the Institute of Charity are developed, viz., the desire of justice without limit, which is the end of the Institute; and the spirit of indifference and of abandonment into the hands of Divine Providence, which comprises the means of attaining that end. As he strove to delineate the supreme principles of philosophy in the *Saggio*, so he lays down the principles of asceticism in the *Maxims*, and his own words on the subject confirm this statement. "The *Maxims*," he writes, "contain the spirit and the ascetic principles of the Institute. I consider that they can never be sufficiently understood, meditated upon, penetrated, and practised. They are the groundwork of the *Constitutions*, and contain the whole Institute in germ."

As the time drew near for his departure from Rome he went to the Jesuits at St. Andrea for a few days' retreat, and an incident occurred there which is worth recording. The Father who directed Rosmini during the exercises, not knowing, probably, that he had already begun to establish a religious institute, gave him the Rules of the Society to read, thinking they might attract him. Father Rosmini, who was already familiar with them, remarked with modest

candour that he considered them beautiful and holy, but in need of some addition or modification in the present day. These words astonished the Jesuit Father, and he sent another Father of greater experience to see his client. After some conversation with Rosmini, this good priest said to him, "I do not think our Lord wishes you to join us; you are destined for something else: follow your own inspiration freely; the devil will wage fierce war against you, but trust in God and you will gain the victory." He was a true prophet.

On the 28th of April he had his farewell audience of Pius VIII. The Holy Father, hearing that he had the *Constitutions* ready, but was not as yet intending to ask for their approval, said to him, "We see that you are content with a negative approval for the present, still We bid you to hasten matters for a formal approval. Obtain first the approbation of the Bishop of the diocese, and then send the *Constitutions* to Us that We may approve them in due course." As to his studies the Pope again bade him devote himself to writing books and seeking to do good by way of the intellect, "for," he added, "in these days men must be led more by reason than by external means. We had Ourself some doubts on this point," he continued, "but after earnest prayer to Our Lord, we still retain the same conviction."

On the 3rd of May, Rosmini left Rome. Near Nepi he again experienced the watchful care of Providence in his behalf, for the postilion being intoxicated, the carriage was upset and damaged, the horses and the driver were severely injured, but Father Rosmini and his two companions were quite unhurt.

On the 7th he stopped at Florence to see Tommaseo, and on the evening of the 13th he arrived at Calvario, to the great joy of the humble little family who were anxiously awaiting him. The object of his journey had been fully obtained: he knew now from the words of the Pope himself that the Institute was on the right road; he was assured that God willed him to devote his time to writing, and he

had been able to bring out in Rome itself the work which was to be the foundation of his philosophy, revised by Padre Orioli, a Conventual, and Padre Pianciani, a Jesuit, and bearing the *Imprimatur* of the Master of the Sacred Palace. Certainly, he had reason to be satisfied. In order to keep to my first resolve, I will not enter into a discussion of the merits of the *Nuovo Saggio*, but will simply relate the history of the reception accorded it.

Cardinal Nembrini, Archbishop of Ancona, who saw each volume of the *Saggio* as it was issued, came to Rome to greet the author as the "future teacher of the world" (*maestro del mondo*). As soon as the work was completed he introduced the study of it into his seminary, and speaking in its praise to the author, he did not hesitate to declare that sooner or later his doctrine would be adopted in the schools. Mgr. Tomaggiani spoke highly of the *Saggio*, and thanked God that by its means the young would now be guarded against materialism. Canon Graziosi, formerly a professor at the Roman College, having read it, spoke of it to his disciples in words that sound like a prophecy. "Rosmini," said he, "is a genius, but we are not yet sufficiently matured for these studies; the *Saggio* will meet with opposition from the shallow-minded and from many who wish to pass for philosophers; I fear the author will have as many sufferings and as much persecution to endure as Mastrofini himself." Orioli was the first to teach the philosophy of the *Saggio* in the Franciscan monastery of the Holy Apostles, and Don Paolo Barola to the students of Propaganda; at Udine, De Apollonia introduced it into the seminary, while Padre Pendola taught it at Siena, in the Tolomei College and the University; Mgr. Scavini, of the seminary at Novara, tried to produce a compendium of it for his clerics, and asked Rosmini himself to furnish an outline of it. The Jesuits, too, received it cordially. Pianciani wrote an epitome of the *Nuovo Saggio* for the *Arcadico* in order to promote its circulation and make it more accessible to ordinary readers. Suryn spoke

of it as "great, lofty, and deep"; Bresciani took the opportunity of encouraging the author to promote a philosophy which, "once received in the universities, would rouse Europe to new life"; while the Father-General Roothan himself, writing about the *Saggio* to the author, called it "a profound and learned work." Amongst laymen, we need only mention Tommaseo and Manzoni. Tommaseo, having read the work "with admiration, but without surprise," made up his mind to become sooner or later an interpreter and exponent of the doctrine. This resolve he carried out in the summary and application of it which he inserted in the *Antologia* at Florence and later on in his *Philosophical Studies*. In the meantime he wrote to Rosmini, "Your work will bear fruit, but slowly, as do all great things." Manzoni did not enter so readily into the teachings of the *Saggio*. With ever-increasing admiration he read the negative part, and exclaimed, "The man that can pull down like this, must be able to build something indestructible." When he came to the positive part, however, he could not fathom it. Ten years were passed in study, reflection, and discussion with his friend on the philosophy of the *Saggio*, and at last Manzoni mastered it. He gave in his adhesion, and wrote the dialogue *Dell' Invenzione*, unequalled in Italian literature for its Socratic skill and Platonic eloquence, which will transmit to posterity the name of the poet-philosopher united with that of the philosopher-poet.

So favourable a welcome was certainly a great encouragement to Rosmini, but he had no illusions about the triumph of the doctrines contained in the work. He knew that the wounds caused by error are too deep to be cured all at once; he foresaw the obstacles these doctrines would encounter in minds already filled with other doctrines or pretended semblances of doctrine; he perceived the immense array of prejudices, ignorance, and incredulity united against them; and yet he hoped on. He hoped much from Italian intelligence, for he considered that the

land of St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and Vico, the land which contained the seat of supernatural truth, was destined to be no less the mistress of the world in respect to natural truth; he relied on the concurrence of good men, especially of the clergy; he trusted in the Holy See, which would achieve a work worthy of its dignity by assisting in the restoration of philosophy; but, above all, he placed his confidence in God, the guardian and champion of truth, and in Time, the faithful servant of Providence in the execution of His designs. Therefore he was not exalted by his hope, for it was humble, nor cast down by his fear, for it was not weakness. "Father," said a dearly-loved spiritual son to him, some years later, "will these doctrines of yours spread in the world?" With animation he replied, "Like wild-fire, like wild-fire, but not yet, the world is not ready. We must be contradicted first; we must die and rot in the ground; then the time will come."

CHAPTER XII

REGULAR NOVITIATE AT CALVARIO—FOUNDATION OF THE INSTITUTE (1830–1835)

AFTER an absence of two years, Rosmini found his hermitage at Calvario more attractive than ever, for solitude has always a charm for holy souls. The splendour of Rome was less to his taste than the rustic simplicity of the poor folk who now surrounded him, and he rejoiced to see with his own eyes the good that had been effected and was still being carried on by his brethren, both in the house and in the surrounding country. The religious community consisted of four persons besides himself. These were Father Lowenbruck, Molinari, a layman named Isaias, and Giuseppe Flecchia, a young man of good family who had recently joined them. Lowenbruck was occupied from morning till night; like another Briareus he seemed to have hands for everything, while fatigue only appeared to make him more hardy. As soon as Molinari was ordained, in the July of 1830, his assistance was at once secured by Lowenbruck, with the hearty consent of Cardinal Morozzo, Bishop of Novara, and of his Vicar-General, Mgr. Scavini. Father Rosmini, remembering the words of Pius VIII., held somewhat aloof from these external works of the sacred ministry; still, he was always ready when required to assist in any work of charity whatever, such as hearing confessions, giving instructions, or directing retreats for laymen and ecclesiastics. But, looking on what he did as little in comparison with the work of his energetic companion, he would take every occasion to depreciate himself and praise the zeal of his fellow-labourer. The fruits of this zeal were indeed manifold; enemies were reconciled,

old-standing debts were paid, and the increase of piety was seen in the numbers of those who flocked to hear the word of God and to receive the Holy Eucharist; and not unfrequently, Protestants were reconciled to the Church. Father Rosmini rejoiced to see so much good effected, but was not elated by it; he was afraid, rather, lest his little company should waste its energies in this sudden and rapid development of external works, and lest the tender plant of the Institute, putting forth its branches and leaves too quickly, should lose its first vigour, or droop and pine away. Feeling that it was necessary to form without delay a regular novitiate for himself and his companions, he began to establish certain regulations calculated to keep up the discipline of the house, and to preserve the spirit of recollection and prayer without prejudice to the works of charity. Their daily life, being thus well regulated, was full of peace and joy, and the Father thus describes it in a letter to Gentili: "The whole day is so well ordered that our time seems to fly; the sweet labours that occupy us are exercises of piety, study, and works of charity." He now began to think of freeing himself from certain obligations towards Canon Capis, who was in possession of the garden and part of the house; he was also rector of the church, so that endless precautions were necessary to avoid giving offence. The Canon was a good sort of man, it is true, kindly and agreeable, but the mere fact of a secular priest living in a religious house was embarrassing, and might at any moment lead to misunderstanding or even to a lawsuit. Rosmini, therefore, offered to purchase the Canon's property at Calvario and provide him with a suitable dwelling in the town, a house belonging to Count Mellerio, which had formerly been an Ursuline convent. The proposal was readily agreed to by Cardinal Morozzo, Mgr. Scavini, and Count Mellerio, and also by the Chapter of Domodossola, who would have welcomed back a member so long separated from them; but Canon Capis took umbrage at the mention of leaving the Mount,

and at the instance of his relatives refused all proposals, so that nothing could be done ; red-tape, self-interest, and legal friction rendered fruitless the well-meant efforts of Father Rosmini, Mellerio, and the Cardinal, as we shall see.

On the 16th of August he was obliged to leave his dear community to visit the Tyrol, where he spent about a month, transacted certain business, renewed his passport, and then hastened back to Calvario. Bisoffi and Fenner were no longer necessary to him, so he left them at Rovereto. This trip to the Tyrol opened the way to the establishment of the Institute there later on.

Once back at Calvario, his first thought was to give the Society the form intended by the *Constitutions ;* and as no real Society can exist without a Superior, the first thing necessary was to provide one. Towards the end of November Lowenbruck of his own accord came to Rosmini and begged him to be their Superior ; a few days later Molinari did the same. He took time for reflection, and in order to ascertain the Divine Will, enjoined three days' fasting and prayer, beginning on the 20th of October. On the 23rd he made a general confession and manifestation of conscience to Father Lowenbruck, in order, as he said, that, knowing his " unspeakable worthlessness and misery," he might confer with Molinari and see what a " monstrous sinner " they were choosing to govern them. On the 24th both Fathers came to him again, their minds still unchanged. In much trepidation and confusion, he then accepted the charge for fear of opposing the will of God, but only until the members should be numerous enough to elect a Superior according to the *Constitutions*. He begged his companions to assist him by their prayers, by bearing with his defects, and yielding to him a loving obedience as if to Christ. Then he named Lowenbruck his admonitor, charging him to be watchful and to correct his faults ; and bearing in mind that, after the word and example of Christ, the Superior in a religious Society must become the servant of all, he would serve the brethren at table for a fortnight. As the *Con-*

stitutions prescribe for all who enter the Society three successive trials before profession, Father Rosmini arranged to pass through his probation in these three grades, and for this purpose conferred on Father Lowenbruck full authority as Master of Novices on the Feast of All Saints. He desired him to observe his conduct and to give his opinion conscientiously. The obedience was accepted by Father Lowenbruck, and carried out with scrupulous fidelity. He subjected the aspirant to the usual examinations, inquiries, and tests, gave him a three days' retreat, and at its close, decided that he might be admitted to the Society and pass through the second and third probations notwithstanding his ailments and uncertain health, "because," as the good Lorrainese ingeniously puts it in the form of admission, "the *Constitutions* provide for the reception even of the ailing, if they long after perfection." Thus it was that, after offering up the Holy Sacrifice as a Victim of propitiation for his sins, Father Rosmini entered on his novitiate or second probation. His two companions then passed through the first probation, and on Christmas Day they began their regular novitiate. Any one entering the humble cloister of Calvario at that time would have witnessed a spectacle not unworthy of the first centuries of monastic fervour, termed the golden age of religious life. The novices vied with each other in mortifying their senses, denying their own will, and in submitting to each other for the love of God; in short they studied to die to themselves that they might be born again as children in Christ. Everything in the house spoke of poverty and sacrifice. The cells were small and ill-protected from the inclemencies of the weather, with rough stone floors, and walls devoid of ornament, except a small crucifix and a common print of Our Lady of Dolours. The furniture consisted of a plain, rough, wooden writing table and chair, two planks for a bed, and a mattress of beech leaves. Over each door a sentence from Holy Scripture was inscribed in order to raise the thoughts to Heaven. The Superior, as if in antici-

pation of the prolonged trials that awaited him in the future, chose for himself the words of the Prophet, "It is good to await in silence the salvation of God" (*Bonum est præstolari cum silentio salutare Dei*).[1] Their meals might be called scanty rather than frugal, and the coarse fare consisted usually of polenta, beans, and potatoes; even Father Lowenbruck, who used to boast that he could dispose at a meal of a small calf all but the bones, was quite content with this poor and homely fare. At first they used wooden spoons, but pewter ones were afterwards substituted, when it was pointed out to Molinari that there was danger of infection, the same spoons being used by the poor for their soup. The novices, including the Superior himself, took it in turns to perform such humble offices of charity as sweeping the house, serving at table, reading at meals, and assisting the cook and the porter. It was indeed beautiful to see the Tyrolese gentleman, the friend and adviser of cardinals and prelates, the philosopher already renowned throughout Italy, cheerfully and modestly, with brush in hand, sweeping the corridors, or, with an apron on, washing up the kitchen utensils, or giving out soup to the poor at the door. His companions tell us that for three or four months he assisted Fra Pietro to scour the pots and pans, and that he devoted himself to this work with as much zest as he did to his daily meditation, which he always made kneeling upright without support, in the choir of the church. He suffered severely from rheumatism, but the only remedy he used was, at Father Lowenbruck's suggestion, to saw a quantity of wood every day. He never took a walk except from necessity, and when invited to go to Mount Simplon and visit the mines of Valle Anzasca, he answered, "It is our rule not to leave our solitude without good reason."

When they were without a lay-brother as porter, he arranged that each one should in turn fulfil that office for a week. Now it happened once when Father Rosmini

[1] Jer. iii. 26.

was porter and assisting the cook, that a prelate arrived to see him. The good Father, hastening to the door at the first sound of the bell, attired more like a scullion than a Superior, admitted the prelate, and requested him to wait a moment. After taking off his apron, he presented himself in more becoming costume before the stranger, who recognised him at once, and was greatly edified.

One day a certain Antonio Bisogni was acting as cook, and Father Rosmini, as assistant, was endeavouring with great earnestness to carry out the directions of his chief; but, for some reason or other, nothing pleased the cook. Bisogni grumbled and grumbled until at last he could contain himself no longer, and burst out with "Go off and preach, hear confessions, or write books. Be off with you; you only spoil things here." The good Father submitted to this rebuff without a word. At another time, through some carelessness, wine mixed with oil was given to him at table. He drank it without appearing to notice the mistake, and when the others detected it, and began to apologise, he simply said, with a smile, "Oh, that is nothing." A certain Tyrolese with literary aspirations, having been received, was at once appointed cook, and remained in that office for three months, during all which time he put no salt into the soup, the literary man imagining that each of the brethren would season it to his own taste. Father Rosmini always took it without showing that he noticed anything amiss; and the others, seeing that the Superior made no remark, could not do less than follow his example.

It was his delight to make the beds and arrange the rooms for visitors who came to make retreats, and he himself undertook to wash the feet of a delicate cleric who had been ordered foot-baths by the doctor; it would have been a pleasure to him to go out begging his bread with a wallet on his back. The sincere humility of heart which prompted him to such acts was apparent in his manner when performing them. To the worldly-minded these actions may

appear to be but an exaggerated display of religious feeling, and even the better disposed may look upon them as antiquated practices unsuited to the refinement of our days. But those who know how powerfully voluntary penance helps to correct the crookedness of corrupt nature, to curb its evil instincts, and to atone for its faults ; those who have realised how such humiliations help the spirit to throw off the yoke of the flesh, and enable it to rise to a new and more perfect life, will certainly admire Rosmini's wisdom in preparing himself by these painful and humiliating exercises for the great works, and the sufferings no less great, which Providence had in store for him. Without these salutary humiliations we should not have seen his virtue so serene in stormy times, so firm under trials, and so perfect amidst sufferings.

During the February of 1831, the Chapter of the Collegiate Church of Domodossola sent three canons to beg Father Rosmini to preach the Lenten sermons, as the holy season was fast approaching and no preacher had been secured. He would have excused himself on account of his weak chest and want of preparation, had he not thought the invitation a sign of the Divine Will ; but when he had, like a simple novice, consulted Father Lowenbruck and received an obedience from him, he undertook the task, at least until another preacher should be found to take his place. No one came, however, and he was obliged to go on till the end of Lent. He chose for his subject the *Imitation of Christ ;* a simple yet lofty theme, inexhaustible in its suggestiveness, and his words were blessed by God.

When Cardinal Morozzo returned from Rome and told him that he was to let others preach, and devote himself to the more important task of writing on behalf of religion and sound principles, Father Rosmini was able to assure him that he had not neglected this duty. In fact, he had been engaged for some months on a treatise on *Conscience* [1]

[1] *Trattato della Coscienza*, published by Pogliani, Milan, 1839 and 1844.

and had completed the *Principles of Moral Science*[1] which was printed at Milan in May as a token of his desire to comply with the wishes of the Holy Father.

We must now retrace our steps a little to see how he had contrived, amidst so many occupations, to prepare the way for a formal approval of the Institute. In April 1830 Pius VIII. had desired Rosmini to get the *Constitutions* approved by the Bishop of the diocese; some months later, when Mellerio had an audience with the Pope, the Holy Father said, "Tell Rosmini to get ready and send the *Constitutions*." Accordingly he wrote two descriptions of the Institute.[2] One of these is a brief description of the Institute in its essence—that is, such as it ought to be in order to attain its end: the other is a description of the Institute such as it might become when fully developed. He sent the first of these to Cardinal Cappellari, who considered it *brief, clear, and precise*, and promised to show it to the Holy Father. Disturbances were rife, however. Revolution broke out in France, Belgium, and Poland; Italy, too, was threatened. Cardinal Morozzo in alarm, sent word to Rosmini that he ought not to bind himself permanently to any one in those evil times, but he replied quietly, "Whether the great events of the world will disturb our small affairs, I cannot tell; and just for that reason, it is better to live from day to day with greater trust in Providence: in this reliance on Divine Providence I find the greatest tranquillity." He began to send the *Constitutions* to Mgr. Scavini, whose judgment was most favourable.

On the last day of November 1830 the Pope died. His death seemed a misfortune for the little Institute; the outlook grew darker and darker; Cardinal Morozzo's fears increased, but the Father only trusted more firmly in God. He expresses this in a letter to Mellerio. "I have such confi-

[1] *I principii della Scienza Morale*, latest edition published by Bertolotti, Intra, 1867.

[2] *Descrizioni dell' Istituto della Carita*, published by Gio. Pane, Casale, 1885.

dence in God," he writes, "that I feel disposed to imitate the prophet who bought a field whilst he was in prison, when Jerusalem was besieged, and the people were on the point of being led into captivity." He paid some regard, however, to Cardinal Morozzo's misgivings; but he wrote to Cardinal Cappellari before the opening of the Conclave, giving him an account of the Society and saying, as if he had a presentiment, "I do not know whether I shall ever again be able to address you with the filial confidence and freedom which your goodness has allowed me to manifest." Cappellari replied, "When God is pleased to give us a new Pope, the business can be fully carried through." Before the end of a month, as Father Rosmini had anticipated, Cardinal Cappellari ascended the Papal throne as Gregory XVI. The new Pontiff remembered Rosmini, and when Cardinal Morozzo came to give him the customary embrace a few days later, sent him a cordial message, adding that he wished him to continue his literary work. Greatly touched by such condescension, Father Rosmini hastened to express by letter his filial devotion to the Holy See, placing himself and the Society at the feet of the Holy Father. The Pope replied in a Brief which breathed all his former benevolence; and we here find the rising Society entitled the *Institute of Charity* by the Sovereign Pontiff himself.

At the conclusion of his Lenten course of sermons, towards the end of April 1831, Father Rosmini set out for the Tyrol, there to found, by a manifest call of Providence, a house of the Society. He stopped at Milan to attend to the printing of his *Principles of Moral Science*, and at the end of May went on to his native town. Having established the Institute at Trent, as we shall presently relate in detail, he resumed the humble duties of the novitiate, and for some years divided his time between Calvario and Trent. On the 22nd of August he left the Tyrol for Calvario, and had the consolation of finding there D. Luigi Gentili, who had, two years previously, begged he would assist him to continue his studies for the priesthood, and

had afterwards asked admission into the Society. Gentili entered on his novitiate with such fervour as to need the curb rather than the spur, and was soon fit to be named Master of his fellow-novices. So ardent was his piety that even during his novitiate he practised extraordinary penances; he never ate meat or drank wine, slept but little, and sometimes watched the whole night in prayer. He frequently disciplined himself to blood, and sometimes scourged himself so severely that he swooned away. Rosmini had a high opinion of his sanctity, and writing to Cardinal Morozzo spoke of him as a man of great worth, not only for his lofty genius but still more for his many virtues. Judging by the severe reprimands given him by this wise Superior, some might consider that the contrary was the case, but we must remember that the wise Father proportioned his corrections to the moral strength of his subjects, and was accustomed to say that those who are the more perfect should be dealt with the more severely; so that we see in this very rigour a proof of the high esteem in which he held his gifted son. Two postulants arrived about this time—Emilio Belisy, a promising young Frenchman, and Clemente Alvazzi, a deacon and native of Ossola. The works of charity, too, increased. Father Lowenbruck had several clerics to instruct; Father Molinari was spiritual director at the college opened by Count Mellerio at Domodossola; priests and clerics in greater number came to renew their spirit in holy retreat; and the Fathers were frequently invited to give retreats in parishes, convents, and seminaries. Now that he had seen for himself how well everything was going on, Father Rosmini returned to the Tyrol on the 24th of October, having nominated Father Lowenbruck Vice-superior, Father Gentili Master of Novices, Father Molinari Prefect of the clerics, and Brother Alvazzi Prefect of the lay-brothers, each official having written rules and directions for his guidance.

He had been absent from Calvario about a fortnight, and had received no letters, though he had asked for news with

affectionate eagerness; when at last a rather mysterious communication arrived from Father Lowenbruck, in which he stated that he had run over to Turin, leaving the house in charge of Father Gentili, who was almost a stranger, and otherwise fully occupied. As to the motive of his sudden journey, Lowenbruck was silent, but he had a great deal to say in a boastful style about the cordial reception accorded him by the Minister, Count di Lescarène, and his lady; adding that the Count had spoken in favour of the Institute to the King, who had graciously expressed his satisfaction. These tidings caused Rosmini great sorrow, and he wrote at once to Lowenbruck, pointing out how he had acted against the spirit of the Institute, which was a spirit of humble dependence on God and of patient expectation, of moderation, and of confidence, not in the great ones of the world, but in God. He complained, too, of the tone of the letter, its want of due respect and straightforwardness. This strange proceeding on the part of Lowenbruck had arisen from his fear that soldiers were about to occupy the old Ursuline convent in Domodossola, which his Superior had rented from Count Mellerio in order to leave Calvario more free for priests' retreats. Rosmini, relying on Cardinal Morozzo's assurance, had no fears; but Lowenbruck with his lively imagination could almost fancy the house filled with soldiers, and could not rest until he had been reassured by the King's Minister. The reprimand from his Superior now afflicted him so much that he had almost decided to give up his vocation for fear of being dismissed. But the good Father soon calmed his fears; he called him to Trent, and with wise and loving words enlightened and consoled him, and having received a promise of amendment, sent him back to Calvario.

At the beginning of April 1832, Father Rosmini, knowing how great was Pope Gregory's interest in the humble Institute of Charity, sent him a minute account of its progress, and also took courage to ask for certain spiritual favours for the members and the novices, as well as for the

ascribed members, a branch of the Institute which had been in existence about a year. In conclusion, he gave the Holy Father an account of his own studies and plans. The Pope replied with a very gracious Brief, manifesting great hopes of the Institute, and freely bestowed the spiritual favours asked. He also thanked Rosmini for the *Principles of Moral Science* which he had sent him, and encouraged him to devote his talent and his labours to the glory of God and the good of the Church.

After Lowenbruck's little escapade there was nothing but good news from Calvario. Molinari proved to be a man of sound judgment, and Father Rosmini did not hesitate to apply to him those words of the wise man, "The understanding of a man is grey hairs."[1] Gentili made rapid progress in every virtue. His work at Calvario was fruitful, chiefly with refined and educated persons, who were impressed by the calm and dignified bearing and the holy austerity of the young Roman priest; whilst Lowenbruck, with his powerful voice, animated gestures, and ardent manner, moved the hearts of the simple, illiterate country people. It was Gentili who this year restored the devotions of the Via Crucis with much solemnity, and established the function of the three hours' agony on Good Friday, which has ever since been continued. Father Rosmini, even while at Trent, was still with his dear brethren by his correspondence, instructing them, admonishing, urging, or restraining them according to need, thinking of each one, not forgetful even of old Fra Pietro.

In the April of this year, Providence sent the community at Calvario a beautiful occasion of proving its truly Christian spirit, for cholera broke out in Switzerland, and the Ossola valleys were threatened with the epidemic. The town authorities of Domodossola sent a lawyer named Bianchi, a great friend of Rosmini's, to ask him for the use of the Ursuline convent as a hospital in case of need, and also to request the brethren to assist the cholera patients,

[1] Wisdom iv. 8.

if necessary. Lowenbruck being absent, Gentili at once wrote to his Superior about the matter, telling him how eager all were to sacrifice themselves in this beautiful work of charity. Father Rosmini's heart overflowed with joy at hearing of these generous desires; he wrote to Bianchi, freely granting the use of the house, and also to Father Gentili, bidding him to place the services of the brethren at the Bishop's disposal for this holy work. He added, "If it please God, I shall certainly go to help you and share your labours for Christ." God averted the scourge, but the generous act of the community at Calvario was none the less meritorious in His sight.

These consolations, however, were not without some admixture of sorrow, as we shall now relate. Lowenbruck, having met in the round of his missionary labours, a number of pious girls desirous of embracing a life of perfection, thought he might bring them together for the purpose of joining the Sisters of Providence, a French Order, which he was anxious to see introduced into Italy. In 1831 some few had already taken up their abode in the old Ursuline convent at Domodossola, and four of these were sent to France to make a novitiate. In 1832 he opened a novitiate house for them at Locarno in the Canton Ticino. It was a good work, but Father Rosmini feared that his companion would spoil it by his imprudence; he warned him, therefore, of the difficulty of the undertaking, and begged to be informed of everything. He also recommended him not to interfere with the temporal affairs of the Sisters, but to confine himself to their spiritual direction. "You know," he wrote, "that the management of financial matters has always been a stumbling-block to you; and temporal affairs, if badly arranged, are often a hindrance to spiritual good." Meanwhile the Marquis Barola, who had founded an infant school at Turin, applied for teachers to Father Lowenbruck, who hastened to Turin to arrange everything at once. Rosmini, on hearing this was much displeased, as he feared these Sisters were not sufficiently trained for work

in towns, and that it was a dangerous step. Still, after some hesitation, he allowed the zealous missionary to arrange matters with the Marquis. No sooner had Lowenbruck received the permission than he at once fixed on three good girls, fresh from the mountains and totally uneducated; he took them off in their peasant costume to Turin, where he procured black dresses for them, had their hair cut off, and provided them with veils, and presented his three ready-made nuns to the Marquis. Father Rosmini was grieved beyond expression when the news reached him: if he had had wings he would have flown to Calvario, but pressing business detained him at Trent, and he could only write his disapproval to Lowenbruck; while he imposed a severe public penance on Gentili, who had been weak enough to take part in this unfortunate business, and added some advice as to how the error might be rectified. On the 1st of August he came to Domodossola and showed Father Lowenbruck his mistake, telling him plainly that, if he continued to act in such a way, it would be impossible for him to remain at Calvario, and placing him under Gentili's guidance in all that concerned the government of the Sisters of Providence, so as to avoid any further mistake. As soon as two Sisters were somewhat better prepared, Rosmini took them to Turin and brought back two of the others, who, feeling their incapacity, were quite ill and depressed. Things being thus a little improved, and Lowenbruck restrained from rushing hither and thither, it was desirable to withdraw him from Locarno, according to the wishes of the Bishop and of his Vicar-General, and also to relieve him from the direction of the Sisters, which was a distraction to him and might at any moment become a danger. Father Rosmini would sometimes send over Father Gentili and sometimes Father Molinari; then he desired Father Lowenbruck to secure the services of a pious and experienced priest of the neighbourhood. Don Carlo Rusca was accordingly chosen by him to undertake the ordinary direction of the Sisters of Providence, whilst he

retained only their general direction. Calvario thus received back its most energetic worker, Cardinal Morozzo and his Vicar-General were satisfied, and Father Rosmini gave thanks to God.

He had already given Monsignor Scavini, Vicar-General of Novara, a copy of the *Constitutions* in 1830: in April 1831, before leaving for the Tyrol, he, in compliance with the Pope's wish, presented a copy to the Bishop, Cardinal Morozzo, so that he might examine them and approve them if he thought well. The Cardinal proceeded very slowly and with great deliberation in the matter. However, in July 1831 Mgr. Scavini wrote, "The Cardinal has almost finished reading the *Constitutions*, and he considers the work a perfect one of its kind. He heartily thanks God for conferring so great a boon on his diocese." On the 17th of August 1832, the Cardinal, touched by Father Rosmini's confidence in God, wrote out a formal approval of the *Constitutions*. Far from censuring anything contained in them, he declared them highly commendable, and on the 16th of October also gave his approval to an abridgement of the same. As an additional consolation after his troubles, God granted Rosmini the happiness of seeing his *Constitutions* approved by Mgr. Tadini, Archbishop of Genoa, to whom he had begged the Cardinal to present a copy of the abridgement, and by Mgr. Monico, Patriarch of Venice. On the 7th of December 1832 he returned to Calvario, and remained there more than four months. He was greatly consoled to see the progress made by the Institute; numbers were increasing, and great piety, exact observance of the Rule, and fervour in the exercise of works of charity animated the members. Father Rosmini writes thus to Mgr. Scavini, announcing his departure for Trent: "I have the consolation of leaving the Community at Calvario in excellent condition; I can never thank God sufficiently for the progress made in solid virtue by all my companions, a progress which covers me with confusion." This was the expression of humility, but his words and example had no doubt produced their

effect on his companions in an increase of charity, of the spirit of prayer, of love of labour and religious observance, indeed of all the characteristic virtues of the Institute.

In April 1833 Rosmini started for Trent, glad to feel that the novitiate at Calvario was flourishing in virtue and increasing in subjects, among whom was a young priest, Cesare Flecchia. During this sojourn in the Tyrol, two events which occurred at Calvario filled him with holy joy. The first was a solemn decree from Cardinal Morozzo, by which, after a high eulogium of Rosmini and his fellow-labourers, the Bishop conferred on him and the Institute the administration and custody of the Holy Mount, in virtue of the rights reserved to the Bishop of Novara at the erection of the Sanctuary by a decree of Monsignor Odescalchi, dated September 28, 1658. In his decree, Cardinal Morozzo speaks of his distress at seeing the sad condition of the Mount when he first visited it, and of his consolation later on when he found it so much improved—raised, as it were, from its squalor—by Father Rosmini, who had come there, full of zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls, to found the Institute of Charity. He goes on to say that the good Father had effected this transformation by devoting to the work his labour, his virtue, his genius, and a considerable portion of his property, and by enlisting the help of many zealous labourers who had gathered round him. The decree was received with great rejoicing; but Canon Capis, considering it an infringement of his rights, brought an action against the Cardinal Bishop, which after six years was decided in his favour. The Cardinal was advanced in years, and, though convinced of the justice of his cause, was so disgusted at the failure of his suit, that for the time he allowed the matter to drop. Many years later, after the decease of Canon Capis, who continued to reside at Calvario till his death, the property reverted to the State, and the Order of Charity finally purchased it by permission of the Holy See.

The second event which rejoiced the heart of Father

Rosmini in the year 1833 was the conversion of a young English lady, the granddaughter of Sir Henry Trelawney, who had himself been received into the Church and had become a priest. Miss Lettice Trelawney, having spent some time with her grandfather and two aunts at Laveno on the Lago Maggiore, had been much struck by the simple, earnest faith of all around her, so different from her preconceived ideas of Catholicity. Doubts began to arise in her mind, and, being highly educated, she resolved to solve them by studying the doctrines of the Catholic Church in order to refute them. Her aunts going about this time to stay in the neighbourhood of Domodossola, she accompanied them, and there made the acquaintance of Father Gentili. The earnestness and fervour of the good Father and his saintly appearance made a great impression on Miss Trelawney, and she resolved to open her mind to him. He first gave her Rosmini's *Maxims of Christian Perfection* and then assisted her in studying the writings of the early Fathers, whose works she read in the original. After some time she was convinced, but a storm of temptations was raised by the devil to deter her from embracing the faith. She pictured to herself her father's anger and the distress and annoyance of her family, and could not summon up courage to face the ordeal. Father Gentili assisted her in this dilemma by his wise advice, his prayers, and the austerities he performed in order to obtain from God the necessary grace. During the Novena of Our Lady of the Rosary in October, he secured the prayers of many other good souls, and permission to have Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. At last, on the feast of Our Lady's Maternity, October 13 (in England, St. Edward's Day), Miss Trelawney made her abjuration, and received conditional Baptism from the hands of Cardinal Morozzo, who would himself administer the sacred rite. On the following day he confirmed the happy convert and gave her Holy Communion, closing the ceremonies with Benediction and a solemn *Te Deum*.

The joys of holy souls are never without an admixture of sorrow, and on this occasion, as on others, Father Rosmini's disappointment came from Father Lowenbruck. He had watched over him like a good father, advised him, warned him against acting hastily, and counselled him to be especially prudent with regard to the Sisters of Providence, to judge calmly and in an obedient spirit. He wrote plainly, " I have a presentiment that you will soon be assailed by some dangerous temptation, and unless you hold firmly to the anchor of obedience you will be shipwrecked." In August Father Lowenbruck went to Aosta to give the spiritual exercises to ecclesiastics, over a hundred in number, and came back somewhat elated at his success, and at some favourable remarks made by the King's Minister; so that he was anxious to establish new houses of the Sisters all over Piedmont. Every postulant that presented herself was admitted ; he always had Sisters to send wherever they were asked for, and he would provide them even without waiting to be asked, little heeding whether they were trained or not. This utter recklessness was the cause of grave anxiety to his Superior, who, not being able to convince him, insisted on the necessity of blind obedience. But the yoke was galling to Father Lowenbruck, and he at last resolved to cast it off. He wrote from Locarno that the Institute of Providence and the Institute of Charity could not be amalgamated; and that, as he was responsible for the former, he must of necessity leave the latter. Rosmini's grief may be imagined. He wrote at once to Lowenbruck, begging and entreating him with tears to reflect on the consequences to himself and to the poor Sisters involved in his rash act, telling him that the resolution could only come from the evil one. But Lowenbruck was unmoved. It was the Divine Will, however, that after the tempest had subsided a little, he should write to his Superior, asking to be released from his obligations to the Institute or from the government of the Sisters. The reply was an invitation

to go to Rovereto, where all could be amicably settled. He went, and no sooner did he see Rosmini than he was completely changed. He threw himself at his feet and begged him to take over the direction of the Sisters ; and after a fortnight's stay, having promised amendment, he once more returned to Calvario to resume his labours with great advantage to that house, which prospered wonderfully. We must not fail to notice the extreme charity of the prudent Superior in the letters he was obliged to write at this time by way of precaution, both for the good of the Sisters and of the Institute of Charity. The Vicar-Capitular of Como had to be apprised of the state of affairs, and it was necessary to communicate with Mgr. Scavini, Don Carlo Rusca, and Father Gentili, that they might help to bring Father Lowenbruck to a better frame of mind. In all these letters Rosmini endeavours to exonerate his companion, and speaks of him as a dear and excellent priest, an indefatigable labourer, a man of talent and virtue, whose mistakes were to be attributed to excessive zeal and erroneous views due to a heated imagination.

About this time two promising clerics from Novara entered the novitiate, Carlo Narchialli and Angelo Rinolfi, as well as two worthy priests, Carlo Gilardi, a native of Switzerland, and Alessio Martin from Savoy, who were a great solace to their good Father. His whole life was thus interwoven with joys and sorrows, but his great soul, unchanged whether in consolation or in grief, was neither elated by the one nor cast down by the other ; he pursued his way, sustained by faith in Divine Providence which makes the true Christian welcome sorrow no less than joy, since both tend to promote the highest good, viz., the glory of God, and the salvation of His elect.

CHAPTER XIII

THE HOUSE AT TRENT (1830–1835)

When Father Rosmini visited the Tyrol in 1830, the Rector of the seminary at Trent and Professor of Moral Theology was Don Pietro Rigler of Bolgiano, a man of great piety and austerity of life ; and the Professor of Dogmatic Theology was Don Giulio Todeschi, a noble Roveretan, remarkable for talent and virtue. These two priests had formed a project of establishing a congregation of ecclesiastics, who would be ready to serve their neighbour in any necessity. Hearing that Rosmini was in the Tyrol, Todeschi hastened to call upon him and invite his co-operation in the proposed work. Upon this, Father Rosmini told him in a friendly way about the little Society which had been begun and was prospering at Calvario by the tender care of Divine Providence, adding that it might possibly be united with the Society in Trent. Todeschi conferred with the Rector, Father Rigler, and both being delighted with Father Rosmini's description of his Society, at once offered themselves as members ; two other excellent priests, named Grandi and Giacomuzzi, also desired to follow their example. Here, then, was the beginning of a congregation, over which Father Rigler presided after Father Rosmini's return to Calvario, according to the directions he received from time to time.

Just at this point, Mgr. Luschin sent Rosmini a pressing invitation to return to his own diocese, and there carry out the designs he had formed for the good of mankind, offering him the seminary, where he might assemble the best of the clergy, to instruct and fit them for the various duties of their priestly office. Rosmini replied by giving a full

account of his undertaking; he also declared himself willing to accept the proposed Society of priests, provided the Society at Calvario were not hampered with claims contrary to its nature. The Bishop expressed himself satisfied, and desired that a beginning should be made without delay. This gave new life and confidence to the members of the Society already begun at Trent, who were directed by Father Rigler under the guidance of Father Rosmini, for the latter really governed the Community by his frequent letters from Calvario. He impressed his future sons with the thought that the one end of their vocation was to sanctify their own souls by the faithful fulfilment of their duties. He moderated their fervour and restrained their eagerness, recommending them to live in humble, confident expectation of the manifestation of the Divine Will, without anxiety about the future. Above all he inculcated perseverance in prayer; for, he said, it is by prayer that great things are accomplished. During this time Father Rigler was looking for a house where the Society should be permanently settled, as the seminary could only be used for a time. The Vicar-General of the diocese, Mgr. Emmanuel Sardagna, a cousin of Father Todeschi's and much attached to Rosmini, also interested himself in the matter.

It was only in May 1831 that Father Rosmini was able to return to the Tyrol, taking with him Boselli—one of the three subjects recommended to him by the Marchesa Canossa—who was now resolved to join the Society. In order to draw down the blessing of God on the new foundation, Father Rosmini made a few days' retreat with the Capuchin Fathers at Rovereto. From this solitude he wrote to Tommaseo, "How delighted I am with the simplicity, the humility, and the fervour of these good religious! What great charity is displayed in their words and in their whole intercourse! Here indeed is sincere love and true virtue, the delight of Him who sees in secret and who here bestows His treasures. Pray for me that I

may save my soul, that I may humble myself and learn from these 'poor of Christ,' the very sight of whom rejoices my heart. I desire nothing in this world more than to learn their science, so much more valuable than ours." Having finished his retreat he passed on to Trent to greet his new companions. He called on Mgr. Luschin and presented him with the Regulations for the proposed union, which his lordship approved, granting him at the same time the temporary use of the seminary, which was closed on account of an epidemic of small-pox. He took up his residence there on the 28th of June with his four priests, Todeschi, Boselli, Rigler, and Giacomuzzi. For three days, all offered the Holy Sacrifice for the great end of the Institute, the sanctification of their souls, and were afterwards admitted to the first probation. During this time Father Rosmini explained the rules, beginning with the most important, and appointed Father Rigler over the rest, taking him for his own confessor and admonitor. He also arranged a time-table and the ordinary discipline of the house, and established the pious custom of having a discourse at dinner every Saturday on Our Lady, the Protectress of the Institute. On the 31st of July they began their regular novitiate, and from that time certain definite works of charity were undertaken. Father Grandi, one of the first who had asked admission, had lately died of small-pox, a victim to his charity towards the sufferers in the above-mentioned epidemic. In August a house called the *Prepositura*, opposite St. Mary Major of the Council, was put up for auction and purchased by Rosmini, who commissioned Father Rigler to adapt it to the needs of the community. No sooner had the small-pox disappeared than the cholera broke out, and Father Rosmini offered his services and those of his companions to the Bishop, generously begging him not to spare them, since the members of the Institute desired nothing more ardently than to sacrifice themselves in the cause of charity.

Now that they were settled in their new abode the com-

munity increased, still governed by Father Rigler, who had been appointed Superior in the diocese of Trent. At the beginning of 1832 there were ten members, among whom was young Francesco Puecher, a man of talent and culture, who afterwards filled important offices in the Society, and there were many others eagerly seeking admission. The daily life in the house of St. Vigilius—so named by Rosmini after the first Bishop of the diocese—was almost identical with the routine at Calvario. The first thought of every member was his own sanctification, and this object stamped its impress and seal upon all their actions. The silence and peace that reigned there made it like a monastery of ancient monks, whilst study and prayer with intervals of manual labour occupied their time. Their attire was simple; the house was so poorly furnished that a bone soup-ladle was considered the most precious of their utensils; their food, frugal and homely as it was, was still further diminished by voluntary abstinence; the cooking may be imagined, for each one was cook in turn. The people christened them *Cicoriani*, and called Rosmini *Padre de' cicoriani*, as if chicory were their choicest food, so that the contemptuous term was really a compliment. The fact that their house had been previously used as a sugar refinery gave rise to another witty appellation, *la raffineria dei preti*, and truly it was a refining process in the way of science and virtue that was carried on within its walls. As for the Founder, the only difference in his regard was that he sought to have the worst of everything, and, by his words, and still more eloquent example, he constantly urged his sons to aim at perfection. In this school they advanced with a rapidity that gave promise of great things in the future, as the sapling under the shade of the parent tree already proves by its upright stem and graceful branches that it will one day develop a more vigorous growth.

They rarely left the house, and then only through necessity or charity; their demeanour was marked by modest

cheerfulness, and they walked through the streets at a quick pace, though without any sign of hurry. On going out they always visited the neighbouring church of Santa Maria to ask our Lord's blessing and protection against the dangers of the world, and again on their return to give Him thanks; which custom gave great edification. They were always glad to enter their beloved retreat again when their business had been despatched. The ordinary works of charity exercised were the spiritual and disciplinary direction of the seminarists and the teaching of theology. Besides this, they had the care of the College of St. Vigilius, established by Father Rigler, of the little Oratory meetings on Sundays and holidays presided over by Father Todeschi, and the care of the poor at the house of St. Lawrence, where Father Todeschi was chaplain. Other calls were made on their charity from time to time. Father Rosmini, too, gladly undertook the various works offered him by Divine Providence. In November 1832, with the consent of Father Rigler, his admonitor, he gave the spiritual exercises to the clerics in the seminary; in December, he began to give a monthly discourse to the Confraternity of Our Lady of Dolours; in March 1833 he opened a class of sacred eloquence at the seminary, and, when necessary, gave his assistance at the little Oratory. Nor did he in the midst of these labours neglect the studies recommended to him by the Holy Father. He wrote numerous letters on scientific subjects, the chief of which were on *The Language of Philosophy* to Orsi, and on the *Method of Prosecuting the Study of Philosophy* [1] to Fontana; at the same time he wrote the *Anthropology, an Aid to Moral Science* [2] and a considerable portion of the *Supernatural Anthropology*.[3]

The good people of Trent rejoiced at the abundance of

[1] *Come si possono condurre gli Studî di Filosofia*, published at Casale, 1845, and in the *Collection of Works* at Milan by Pogliani, 1851.

[2] *L'Antropologia in servizio della Scienza Morale*, published by Miglio at Novara, 1847.

[3] *Antropologia Soprannaturale*, published at Casale by Gio. Pane, 1884.

heavenly blessings thus poured down upon them, and the Bishop openly manifested his pleasure. He visited Rosmini in the new house, encouraged him to make the necessary improvements, and, laying his hand on his heart as priests do when taking an oath, solemnly promised to give him his support at the court of the Emperor. All seemed to be sailing prosperously; yet Rosmini wrote to Mellerio as early as January 1832 that there were clouds on the horizon, though neither thunder nor hail, as yet. He added, "I hope that, if things go on very well, we may be found worthy of some heavy cross; by the mercy of God we shall be ready to rejoice in the will of our Heavenly Father." The first persons to stir up opposition were the proprietors of theatres and other places of amusement, who were annoyed at seeing the young drawn away from public-houses and places of entertainment. They grumbled at these Roveretans, who were determined to turn Trent into a huge monastery. Others supported them in an underhand way by affecting to pity the rich and learned nobleman who was leading so remarkably strange a life. Even amongst the clergy some were inclined, either through narrow-mindedness or a spirit of jealousy, to take an unfavourable view of the active zeal of these good brethren. The Austrian police, always ready to suspect any association in which there were foreigners, were not likely to pass over a movement of this kind in the town; in fact, the Government sent to the Mayor Giovanelli for information; and he replied, not maliciously, but through sheer ignorance, that the association was intended to become a house of Jesuits, and that they wore a particular habit—assertions which were utterly false.

These rumours reached Mgr. Luschin, who, with all his goodness, was not lion-hearted, and, next to the loss of God's grace, dreaded nothing so much as the forfeiture of the Emperor's favour. He showed the first symptom of timidity in January 1832, when Rosmini wished to receive Brunatti, the rector of the seminary. The Bishop at first

said "Yes," and then "No," he gave his consent and withdrew it again, like a man who does not know his own mind. His lordship showed his fear still more plainly in May, when he returned the *Constitutions* to Rosmini, saying that he could not allow his diocesan clergy to enter the Institute of Charity until it had been sanctioned by proper authority. The Father was amazed at this declaration, so out of keeping with his former professions; he waited on the Bishop to ask for an explanation, and pointed out that if he meant ecclesiastical authority, permission had already been given for the spread of the Institute with the consent of the Bishops, quoting a recent Brief from Pope Gregory XVI. to that effect; but if his lordship alluded to the civil authority, he had promised to use his own influence with the Emperor. The Bishop seemed bewildered, unable to decide between two conflicting plans. At last it was settled that for the present Rosmini should go on as before, but, at the approaching visit of the Emperor Francis I., he must apply to him for some form of approval.

It was not his desire to seek the favour of secular princes; but he felt obliged to acquiesce in deference to the wish of the Bishop, and because he could not abandon a work so evidently blessed by God. He ordered prayer and fasting in the houses at Trent and Domodossola, and placed his confidence in God, saying, "The Father is greater than all." In June 1832 he repaired to Innsbruck, and on the 25th was admitted to an audience with the Emperor, who received him very graciously, having heard much in his favour from Mgr. Luschin and Mgr. Sardagna, Bishop of Cremona. His Majesty said he was aware of the existence of the Society in Trent, and that he would protect it, if it were subject to the Bishop; the approbation of the Holy See was all very well, but the matter must be arranged through the Bishop. He laid great stress on this dependence on episcopal authority. Evidently it was of more importance to him that the Society should be dependent on

the Bishops, who were men of his own choice, than on the Holy See : the laws of Joseph were still in force, and the spirit of the *Royal Sacristan* was yet living. The Emperor gratefully accepted some works presented to him by the Father before leaving, and commended them highly. Father Rosmini returned to Trent on the 3rd of July.

After this audience, Mgr. Luschin, whose fears were allayed, once more showed a friendly interest in the Society, and when called upon to state his opinion on Rosmini's petition gave it a favourable vote, praising the priests of the Congregation for their great zeal and irreproachable life, though in some succeeding remarks there was just a tinge of jealousy and want of confidence. The effect of his vote was a decree from the Emperor giving a temporary approval to the Institute of Charity, provided its members made no vows and were entirely dependent on the Bishop, so that his permission would be necessary for the admission of any subject or for the dismissal of those already admitted ; that for the present there should be but one house with from twelve to fifteen priests, who should live according to canonical discipline and the decrees of the State. These conditions would certainly impede the development and the action of the Institute ; still, Rosmini submitted, trusting in the discretion of the Bishop, who might modify them, and relying yet more on God, who would provide for the future.

After this storm, the little bark of the Institute seemed to enter a calm ocean and freely make way. The house was enlarged, improved, and made more sanitary and commodious ; the College of St. Vigilius was increased, and soon had more than a hundred students ; the activity of the brethren increased both in the house and outside, to the joy of all good men, but to the discomfiture of the evil-minded, who, not content with speaking against these holy Fathers, tried to burn down the College. Father Rosmini had in the meantime gone to Calvario, and though his influence was no longer visible, it was he, who, hundreds

of miles away, still directed the brethren at Trent, assisting them by his advice and infusing into them his own spirit, even as the rising sun tinges the light clouds in the azure sky and clothes with brightness the summits of the hills, while its radiant orb is yet hidden from view. By the good Father's exertions their church was enriched with altars and embellished with paintings by good artists, to make it a fit abode for our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. He writes, full of joy at this thought, to Father Rigler, "My heart is overjoyed at the thought that you are putting in the altar-stone. Perhaps our Lord is already with you; I am anxiously awaiting the gladsome news, for as long as we are without our Beloved under our roof, all our work and our building seem to me as nothing." Other letters written at this time express his love of artistic beauty in religious art, and show how he inspired the artists themselves with his own refined sentiment.

In April 1833, as we have seen, Father Rosmini returned to his dear companions at Trent and resumed the ordinary duties of charity. In July he gave the spiritual exercises to some priests in his house at the Monte, Rovereto; he did the same in September, and in the following year gave a retreat to the clergy of Trent. There were many requests for admission to the Institute; Felix Moschini, who had studied at Verona, a brother of Maurizio, was received. Robert Setti, a cleric, Fenner, a priest, Gasperini and others asked for admission, but Mgr. Luschin became daily more averse to his priests entering the Institute. Still, it was at this very time that the number of subjects at Trent was greatest; in August they were able to send Father Todeschi to Cremona to his cousin Mgr. Sardagna, and in November a small party of three to open a house at Verona at the request of Mgr. Grasser. According to the intention of the Bishop of Cremona, Todeschi was to sow the seed of an establishment of the Institute, to be opened in Cremona when it should please God to give the increase. The three subjects Father Rosmini took to Verona were, Oberrauch,

a priest, Aliprandi, a cleric, and Lugan, a lay-brother; the first of whom was to be chaplain at the church of San Pietro Incarnario for the German residents, and the other two were to assist him. They spent the first night with the Oratorians and the next few days with the Bishop; but as soon as the little house was habitable they repaired to it. Brother Lugan relates that, the bedsteads not being ready, they all, Rosmini included, slept for several nights on the floor. This small house, dependent on that of Trent, went on for several years to the great satisfaction of the Bishop, and when the Community at Trent was dispersed, the brethren received hospitality there. Later on, it opened the way to a foundation at Verona in the parish of St. Zeno, as we shall see. In this year, 1833, Rosmini sustained two severe losses. The first was the death of his friend Stofella, whose mind and heart he had cultivated with such devoted care, and who, on account of his talent and virtue, gave promise of great things. The second was the death of his sister Margherita, Superior of the Canossians at Trent, whom he cherished with a holy affection for her rare virtue. She had been recalled to Verona by the Marchesa Canossa in November 1832 because of her failing health. Five months later her brother paid her his second visit when returning to the Tyrol, and found her near her end, given up by the doctors, but perfectly calm; and, like all holy souls, more wishful to die than to live. He saw her a third time on the 31st of May, and found her longing still more ardently for her heavenly home. She died, purified by her long sufferings, on the 15th of June, to the great grief of her saintly brother, who felt the separation most keenly, though he felt sure she had exchanged earth for heaven. In a letter to Tommaseo he says, "I have never experienced such sorrow in my life, nor could I have believed human nature capable of grief so profound." Yet the blow was softened by his lively faith, which gave him a peace both deep and true even in the midst of his affliction. These sorrows would seem to have been sent to him by

God as a preparation for greater trials about to be inflicted by his fellow-men. The first was an attack on Todeschi. Early in 1834, Mgr. Luschin, replying to a letter from Father Todeschi, peremptorily called upon him to give up his chair of dogmatic theology at the seminary, and offered him the parish of St. Maria at Rovereto; soon after, with evident inconsistency, he asked Mgr. Sardagna to confer on him a benefice which would give him plenty of occupation without the cure of souls. Father Todeschi received the unexpected humiliation with joy; yet, thinking there was a snare planned by evil-minded persons, he wrote to the Bishop with modest frankness asking to be heard before he was judged. Father Rosmini, too, wrote a request that justice should be done to the reputation of his companion, and Mgr. Sardagna wrote yet more strongly. Mgr. Luschin then perceived that he had taken a false step which he could not easily retrace. Fortunately for him a decree arrived from the Emperor just at this time, nominating him Archbishop of Leopoli in Galicia. Todeschi went back to the seminary at Trent, and there the matter ended. The Bishop never stated the real cause of his action, but the reader will easily gather what it was from other circumstances which we shall have to relate.

In August 1832 Rosmini had presented the *Constitutions of the Institute* to Mgr. Luschin in order to obtain the royal approval; more than a year passed without his hearing anything further, and he began to suspect that there was some obstruction. He was not mistaken. He applied to the Governor of the Tyrol to get the difficulty removed, and repeatedly requested Mgr. Luschin to arrange the matter before leaving for his new diocese; but, as usual, received nothing but promises and fair speeches. It must be noted that during this time, Rosmini, yielding to the Bishop's wishes, had accepted the parish of St. Mark at Rovereto; but now, when the Roveretans addressed a request to the Government for a house of the Institute in their town, the reply was that it could not be granted until

the ecclesiastical sanction had been accorded to the Society in Trent. This was a gleam of light on the subject, and Father Rosmini could see that Mgr. Luschin had never really been favourable. All doubts were removed when he saw with his own eyes the conditions attached to the approval of the Institute by that prelate, and the written opinion which accompanied it. The conditions were, that the Institute should only have one house in the diocese, with from twelve to fifteen priests, who were not to have charge of a parish; that they should depend on the Bishop in the exercise of their ministry, and notify to him all who were to be received even as ascribed members. In his written report he described the Institute as trying to intrude everywhere, especially in parish work. It is not worth while refuting such a misrepresentation. But it is strange that whilst Mgr. Luschin was trying to get the Institute excluded from parish work, and accused the members of trying to intrude themselves into it, he offered the parish of St. Maria at Rovereto to Todeschi, and the parish of St. Mark to Rosmini, and conferred the chaplaincy in the German Tyrol on another priest from the house at Trent. Was it mere inconsistency, or could it have been an artifice to give colour to the accusation? It would be difficult to admit such a thing. More probably his aim was to rid himself of the Community at Trent by scattering the members, so that the Institute, thus dispersed and crippled, might die out of itself. Rosmini might have perceived earlier that the Bishop was not to be relied upon, and that his Vicar-General Freinadimetz, a clever but crafty man, was a dangerous person to deal with; yet he trusted them both, for an upright man finds it almost impossible to doubt the sincerity of others. When he found himself thus deceived, he felt it keenly, yet his peace was undisturbed, because his own conscience did not reproach him. Seeing how much harm had been done by Mgr. Luschin, he resolved to try and repair it, if possible, with the help of the new Bishop. But before entering on

this matter we must retrace our steps a little, and consider other trials which about this time put the virtue of the man of God to a severe test.

The house at Trent, after having attained great prosperity, fell by degrees in a short time into a sad state of desolation. Felice Moschini, attacked by an insidious disease, was taken by our Lord in the flower of his youth; Father Rigler, on account of a chest-trouble, had to go to Cremona, where the climate was milder. Father Todeschi suffered still more severely from nervous prostration, which left him a prey to gloominess of mind, scruples, melancholy, and terrible agitation. The consequence was that an air of sadness pervaded the house, as he then held the place of the absent Superior. Father Boselli was overwhelmed with work. Setti was in bad health, while others were suffering from fever or other ailments. Still the authorities continued to oppress the poor afflicted Community by vexations of one kind or another without mercy. Ill-disposed persons took occasion from so much sickness to spread the report that the place was unhealthy and their way of life wretched; this brought on them a minute inspection of the house by order of the Government. Rosmini, undismayed by these trials, sought only to comfort his sons, so severely tried by men and by the hand of God. These sorrows were followed by a trial still more keenly felt, because it was caused by one whom he venerated as a father. Rigler, discouraged perhaps by the sad aspect of affairs at Trent, lost all heart, and after ruminating on the subject for some months, gave vent to his feelings in melancholy and gloomy letters. In these communications, addressed to Rosmini, he heaped up accusations of all kinds against his doctrines and opinions. Our good Father, after having, with saintly humility, attributed to himself the misfortunes that had befallen the Institute, undertook to meet the accusations one by one with infinite patience, less for his own justification than out of charity towards his friend, so tempted and wavering. Yet what

anguish it must have been to find himself misunderstood, suspected, and so harshly judged by one who was the director of his soul!

We have now to recount the last efforts made for the preservation of the house at Trent. Mgr. Luschin had been succeeded by Mgr. Tschiderer, a pious and upright prelate, to whom Father Rosmini appealed with confidence in order to ascertain his disposition with regard to the Institute; and hearing that he was about to do homage to the new Emperor Ferdinand, Rosmini brought the affairs of the Institute under his notice in a memorial. The Bishop never mentioned the matter to the Emperor, but told Mgr. Ostini that he would have only one religious order in his diocese, upon which Ostini proposed introducing the Jesuits, and offered to write to Rosmini inviting him to pass into the Company of Jesus with his brethren! In fact he made this candid proposal to the Father, who replied that though he venerated the Society as a mother, it was not in his power to change the vocation God had given him, and still less that of his companions. Shortly after, feeling that it was time to come to some conclusion, he wrote the Bishop a full account of the Institute at Trent from its foundation, begging him to tell him plainly whether he thought it better that the Institute should continue as it was, or be in some degree modified though not in essentials, or that the house in Trent should be closed, adding that he would receive his lordship's decision as the Will of God. The Bishop replied that the *Constitutions* did not seem to leave the subjects entirely at his disposal, and that they exacted a kind of universality contrary to the laws of the State. Rosmini wrote again, pointing out that no religious Order could exist without a certain degree of exemption from episcopal authority, that the Institute required only a minimum of this exemption, and that not being local it could render greater service to the Bishop in various works of charity. His lordship, still desiring to have entire control of the Institute, suggested that Father Rosmini should

establish a congregation of Oratorians instead. To a proposal of this nature, Rosmini no longer hesitated to reply that he would relinquish the idea of establishing the Institute in Trent. Adoring the designs of Divine Providence in this event, he announced the closing of the house to his brethren in the following beautiful letter :—

"To my beloved Brethren, Priests, and Lay-Brothers of the Institute of Charity, at the House of Christ crucified, Trent, the fortitude and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

"Our dear Brothers, Don Francesco Puecher and Don Giulio Todeschi, will tell you, by word of mouth, the reasons which have obliged me to close the house of the Institute at Trent. I can quite understand, dearest Brothers, how bitter this announcement must be to your hearts. But if you reflect that the difficulties which induced me to take this step are insurmountable, you will adore in this event the inscrutable counsels of the everlovable Providence of God, and will understand by experience the spirit of our rules, which requires us to allow ourselves to be directed by the goodness of God in whatever way He may please, and to preserve perfect indifference and equanimity under every accident, however untoward it may appear.

"What grieves me most deeply is the necessity of informing you that, as we have no other house at present in the Austrian dominions, I am obliged to release you from every tie that binds you to the Institute. God, in whose service you desire to persevere, will be your protector, however; and may perhaps in the future call you together once more in His own good time if you persevere faithfully in your vocation, and thus deserve that He should confirm and establish you in it by His grace.

"It may be that He sends this trial in order to grant you that reward; it may be that He intends, by this means, to cut off those who were unworthy, or that

you may, by your fidelity, render yourselves worthy of it.

"Meanwhile I beg to thank you all for the faithful obedience you have shown to me, for the unspeakable charity you have displayed in bearing with my shortcomings, and I beg pardon of all for the bad example given by my faults, in punishment of which it may be that our Lord lays His hand thus heavily upon us.

"I have such confidence in your great charity that I trust the assiduous prayers you pour forth for me will obtain my conversion and forgiveness, and appease our Lord, in whom, with the tenderest affection, I embrace you all and bless you.—Your servant in Christ,

"A. Rosmini.

"Dec. 15, 1835."

As soon as the house was closed Father Boselli with a lay-brother took refuge in the little house at Verona; Father Todeschi found some one to take up his professorship at the seminary and went to the Bishop of Cremona; Father Setti remained at the college, anxiously awaiting an opportunity of going to Calvario; Father Puecher accompanied Father Rosmini as his secretary, and nearly all the lay-brothers returned to their homes. Father Rigler had already considered himself released from the Institute, and secretly left; he purchased the house of the Prepositura from Rosmini for a trifling sum and lived there. Too narrow-minded to understand the noble soul of his friend, he could not but admire his virtue; many years after he had recourse to him for advice, hoping, perhaps, to quiet remorse of conscience, and make some excuse for his desertion.

Such was the sad end of the Institute in Trent, where it had been established under such happy auspices. Father Rosmini, when once assured of the Divine Will, folded his tents and left with the same equanimity with which he had come: he departed without anger or bitterness, without complaints or reproaches, grateful to his benefactors, full

of compassion and forgiveness towards his adversaries. Disappointments, which so often lead weak and ungenerous souls to take a harsh view of poor human nature, and to blame Divine Providence itself, did but help Father Rosmini to understand men and human events more fully, and to centre his hopes in God alone. About this time he wrote, "If the principles of the Institute were well understood it would be seen that they are better adapted to the needs of our day than those of other religious Institutes. The misfortune is that the Institute of Charity is not understood, and has no chance of being understood, because it is made the object of persecution before it is well known or firmly established. However, I am filled with hope that it is willed by God, and looking on these obstacles as a good augury for the future, I heartily thank God for them." In a letter to Father Giacomuzzi he says, "If our Lord has not allowed the Institute of Charity to take root in Trent, attribute it to my unworthiness and nothing else. *Magnus Dominus et laudabilis nimis.* I must thank the mercy of God for the gift of peace and true joy which I feel in this affair, for I can honestly say that I am not only perfectly tranquil, but satisfied." And again, "This experience is a great lesson for me: I have learnt things I neither knew nor even imagined. I praise and bless the Lord for it all a thousand and a thousand times." We too may bless Him both for the great good effected by the Institute in Trent, and the heroic examples of virtue called forth by its fall; above all we may learn that holy undertakings are brought to nought, not only by the wicked, but often by the good, through human prudence or cowardly fear, narrowness of mind or meanness of spirit.

As a counterpoise to this sad recital of trials and difficulties, we may give a glance at Father Rosmini's earnest efforts for the restoration of science, which he regarded as his chief mission, having been so repeatedly assured of this by the Sovereign Pontiffs. We cannot but admire him at this time, overwhelmed with cares, afflicted in mind,

and frequently suffering in body, still watching with interest the scientific movement initiated by the *Nuovo Saggio* which he had already published. He took part in it by his correspondence with those lovers of truth who appealed to him as a master, and by other treatises directed to explain and apply the doctrines contained in the *Saggio*. More than a thousand letters testify to his unwearied industry. Among the works on which he was engaged were *Anthropology as an Aid to Moral Science* and *Supernatural Anthropology*. The latter work, which was to have comprised six parts, was only carried by the author to the fourth. The fifth was to have treated of *The Divine Redeemer, the Archetype of Man*, and the sixth of *The Mother of the Redeemer, the Archetype of Woman*. The following passage in a letter to his friend Barola shows how his soul rejoiced at the thought of what he was about to write : " The last division of the work I have now in hand will treat of Mary most holy. Oh ! how great will be my consolation if I am enabled to reach that portion of my work ; the very thought of it fills me with joy. Do pray to our dear Mother that she may obtain for me the grace to write worthily of her." The *Supernatural Anthropology* was left incomplete, however; for external circumstances, which Father Rosmini considered to be manifestations of the Divine Will, caused him to suspend his labours in order to attend to more urgent needs. Yet, even in its incomplete state it is a monument of his theological science and ardent piety.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PARISH OF ROVERETO (1834–1836)

Father Rosmini was deeply attached to the spot which gave him birth, where his soul had first begun to appreciate the beauties of nature, and where he had learnt to know God from His beautiful works under a pious mother's tender care. He loved Rovereto, and seized every opportunity of conferring benefits on his native town. In 1833 some of the Roveretan clergy, seeing the good done by Rosmini and his companions in Trent, begged him to undertake similar work in his native place, and in compliance with their desire he purchased from his sister Margherita a large house near the church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the parish priest of which, the Rev. T. Oliari, shortly after invited him to establish the Institute there; the Mayor of the town proposed later on that he should exchange the property near St. Mary's for the old hospital, to which was attached the church of Loreto, and establish the Institute there. The good Father, who had the advantage of the people in view, accepted the proposal on certain reasonable conditions, one of which was that permission should be granted by the authorities for introducing the Institute into Rovereto.

In the meantime, while the arrangements were still pending, the archpriest, the Rev. C. B. Locatelli, died in February 1834, and the Roveretans soon expressed their wish that Rosmini should succeed him. The magistrates petitioned Mgr. Luschin to make the appointment. "Why should we seek elsewhere for a pastor," they said, "when we have here amongst us one of our fellow-citizens well qualified, renowned for learning and virtue, and for his

remarkable works, and an example to the clergy of modesty and charity?" The clergy joined the magistrates in their petition; hence the Bishop, taking their joint request as a sign of the Divine Will, invited Father Rosmini to enter the concursus. The good Father hesitated: on the one hand he was influenced by the pressing solicitations of the townspeople, the Bishop's word, the advice of his confessor, and the hope of doing good in Rovereto; while on the other, he was withheld by his responsibility as head of an Institute, with all the solicitude it entailed, as also by his weak health, and by the studies he had undertaken as a matter of conscience in obedience to the wish of the Holy Father. All this he humbly laid before the Bishop that he might weigh the matter in the presence of God. His lordship, after some hesitation, replied that he ought to accept the post, and the Vicar-General Freinadimetz added his entreaties to those of the Bishop. The expressions of the Vicar were not sincere, for he entertained a secret animosity towards Rosmini and his Society, which he did not openly declare for fear, as he said, of being stoned by the Roveretans. Father Rosmini then resolved to accept the parish on condition that four priests of the Institute should be permitted to assist him; but as the Curia delayed to grant this, he did not present himself at the concursus held on the 2nd of May. The Bishop was displeased at this, and sent him word that if he would state his conditions in writing they should be granted; to which he replied that he would leave everything to his lordship's discretion, asking to be allowed to give up the parish whenever it should seem necessary. The next meeting was fixed for the 19th of June; Father Rosmini was present, and on the 21st of the same month he was appointed parish priest of St. Mark's, to the great joy of Rovereto, but to the regret of those who expected from him the restoration of the sciences in the service of religion.

During the four months that elapsed before he entered on his duties as archpriest, he devoted himself to making

the necessary preparations to ensure the success of his work. The presbytery being at an inconvenient distance from the church and too small for the number of priests required, he asked to have an old building near St. Mark's adapted for their use, and, to hasten on the work, advanced money to cover his share of the expenses. Then he did his utmost to secure four priests as coadjutors, for the late pastor, Locatelli, with all his goodwill, had never been able, assisted by one curate only, to remedy the disorder of his parish. He succeeded in obtaining three from the Curia. They were Gottardi, Mayr, and Mantovani, but the fourth he never had.

He chose the Feast of the Rosary, which fell that year on the 5th of October, for entering on the work of the parish. He arrived from Trent on the previous evening, conducted in triumph, as it were, by the clergy, the professors from the public school, the magistrates, and a multitude of people, some of whom had gone as far as Trent to meet him, others to St. Hilary's; the bells rang out a joyous peal, and the sound of cannon echoed across the valley. The Vicar-Capitular, Mgr. Freinadimetz, installed him in his office with the usual ceremonies, and Father Rosmini himself preached a discourse to the assembled multitude on the duties of a good pastor, in words which faithfully describe his own life as a pastor of souls. He summed up the duties of a pastor under four heads. First, to restore the work of God by reforming the soul disfigured by original sin, and, to endeavour to regenerate and strengthen it by the grace of the Holy Sacraments. Secondly, to enlighten the soul with the life-giving light of the Gospel, teaching both by word and example. Thirdly, to form the Christian people to holy living, so that they may preserve the grace and increase the light received. Fourthly, to protect the flock from wolves; that is, from pernicious doctrines and from the contamination of evil.

This was a memorable day, which marked the passing of the Institute from the retirement of a contemplative life to

a life of eminently active charitable work, the highest form of which is the pastoral ministry. In memory of the occasion the people of Rovereto printed and dedicated to their new archpriest *Testimonies of Homage and Consolation*—verses in Latin and Italian—contributions from all classes of persons. These demonstrations, so spontaneous and cordial, did not elate the pious priest; his mother seemed to herself to detect the *Crucifige* amidst the joyous *Hosannas*, and he himself remarked in a letter to Mellerio, "So far there are but roses and violets; I am expecting the thorns."

He took up his abode at the new residence with the three priests assigned him, Father Puecher, his secretary, whom he brought from Trent, and three lay-brothers to attend to the household duties. They all followed a strictly regular life, even some who were not members of the Institute, so that Rovereto beheld at St. Mark's the union of religious and parochial life which had been seen at Cæsaræa, Hippo, Vercelli, Ivrea, and Milan in the days of Sts. Basil, Augustine, Eusebius, Veremondo, and Charles Borromeo. This example itself was one of the means by which the good pastor cared for his sheep.

The parish priest must know the souls committed to his care if he is to provide effectually for their wants. Now the wants of the people of St. Mark's—who were upwards of 7000—were many and great, for the former parish priests, however good their will, had never had able co-operators. Faith had grown cold in the parish for want of solid instruction, the Sacraments and practices of piety were neglected, children uncared for, the young given up to the pursuit of pleasure; the working classes disgusted with family life and given to excess. Hence, poverty was on the increase, families were overwhelmed with debt and torn by discord; the ties of conjugal affection were weakened, and many a young girl driven to disgrace. Such was the state of the parish at Father Rosmini's arrival. His first step was to visit every one of his parishioners, rich and poor, without distinction, in order to see with his

own eyes how matters stood, and to gain them to God by this mark of affection; in every house the appearance of the good pastor was like the advent of an angel diffusing an atmosphere of gladness and peace.

He began by distributing large alms to relieve the temporal needs of his people. These monthly and weekly distributions included considerable sums of his own—upwards of 3000 florins, Father Puecher tells us—beyond what was to be dispensed from the benefice and the Congregation of Charity. But finding it impossible to assist all who were in need, he endeavoured to touch the hearts of the rich by a discourse delivered in St. Mark's at the solemn requiem for some benefactors, and by another addressed to the Congregation of Charity *On the Proper Distribution of Alms*, thus inducing the rich to bestow generously on the poor what God had bounteously granted to them.

The heart of this good shepherd was still more deeply moved by the spiritual needs of his flock. His first care was for the children, who are the family and the nation of the future. For their benefit he re-organised the schools of Christian doctrine, and drew up regulations for them, and as the priests were too few to attend to a thousand children, he begged and obtained the assistance of the Confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament and of the Holy Souls, as well as that of the schoolmasters and other pious persons. He provided more solid instruction for adults in his parochial sermons and dialogues on Christian doctrine [1] preserved by Father Puecher, which have been handed down to us, and are fragrant with the faith of the early Church. In order to provide abundant pasture for his flock and hasten the desired change, Father Rosmini thought of establishing the little Oratory as he had done at Trent. As an experiment he began in the presbytery on the Vigil of the Immaculate Conception, 7th December, and notified the fact to the Vicar-Capitular, asking his support.

[1] Published in the *Catechetica*, vol. i. of *Prose Ecclesiastiche* by Pogliani, Milan, 1838.

The Vicar replied coldly, recommending moderation and prudence. The Oratory was divided into two sections: one for children, which met only on holidays; the other for adults, who assembled every evening to spend an hour or so together. The numbers were so great from the first that the place was too small, and the result surpassed all expectation. The youths and the working men who had been in the habit of spending their evenings in taverns, drinking, quarrelling, and swearing, were now to be seen readily and quietly returning home, to the comfort of their families and their employers. The attendance at church and at the Sacraments increased; more than four hundred persons who had for years neglected their duties were reconciled to God; drunkenness disappeared, the streets were quiet at night, peace reigned once more in many a home, and scandals were almost unknown. The Oratory was not sufficient, indeed, to remove all causes of scandal, for some were inveterate and difficult to root out, such as cases of persons living in sin and leading disorderly lives. The holy man did not hesitate to address himself boldly to the authors and abettors of these evils, yet he did it so graciously that all promised amendment. Having put a stop to the evil, he took steps to prevent its recurrence by placing girls who were in danger, with respectable families, or providing them with means for a suitable settlement in life; and in some cases he had recourse to the authorities of the town for assistance in the cause of morality. This thoughtful and well-directed charity was wonderfully blessed by God. "Things are going on most prosperously," wrote Father Gentili, who was just then at Rovereto; "Father-General is doing wonders; he is nothing less than a great saint. He is wearing himself out for his flock: in season and out of season he reproves, entreats, rebukes in all patience and doctrine, heals old animosities, removes scandals, leads back sinners to repentance, and does endless good." The Rev. Agostino dalla Piazza, another eye-witness, wrote to Father Paoli later on, "God reigns once

more in families, and with His presence all good things have returned. Love and happiness are once more at the hearth where hatred and anger formerly reigned; submission and filial tenderness have taken the place of rebellion and ingratitude, and the eyes of many poor mothers beam with a joy to which they had long been strangers."

We must also notice what Father Rosmini did for the beauty of Divine worship, that important part of Catholic teaching. He presented two lamps for the church and a beautiful picture executed to his commission by Udine; after which he offered to have the whole church decorated if the town authorities would bear the expense of the scaffolding, but nothing came of it. He induced them, however, to have the relics of the Venerable Jane of the Cross placed in a more suitable spot, and duly honoured.[1] He had all the sacred functions carried out with the greatest solemnity. His very presence added to the sacred rites that which mere external observance will never impart, viz., a spirit of lively faith and solid piety visible in his countenance and in his whole demeanour. No one could fail to be struck by his air of recollection and the modest sweetness of his expression; indeed there was a something superhuman in his exterior which seemed to be the outcome of a soul rapt in God. We shall mention only one of the sacred functions especially dear to him, which he celebrated with the greatest care, the First Communion day of the children. He arranged suitable instructions and prayers to precede the solemn act on which the future of a Christian soul so much depends. The day itself was solemnised with special rites introduced into the parish some years previously, including a sermon at the Mass, the singing of certain psalms and hymns, and the renewal of baptismal vows, so that a deep impression might be retained by the children to help and encourage them in many sad and perilous hours of later life.

[1] The Venerable Jane of the Cross was a Poor Clare who died at her convent in Rovereto in 1673.

His vigilant charity was occupied also with the schools of the town and the deanery. He visited them frequently, and drew up a report for the ecclesiastical authorities containing various suggestions for their improvement. As a delegate of the Curia he also superintended the philosophical and theological studies of the two Franciscan monasteries, and amidst all these occupations he still found time to interest himself in the academy which had received him in his boyhood: it was there that he read an eloquent discourse on *Celibacy*.

No good person in Rovereto could fail to rejoice at seeing the marked improvement effected by the zeal of this holy priest; the enemy of all good, on the contrary, let loose his satellites to molest him from the first. On the very day when Rosmini was being welcomed to Rovereto, some wicked people circulated a pamphlet in verse, written in the dialect of the place, to discredit him; however, neither he nor any sensible people condescended to notice them. This attempt having failed, they resorted to another plan, truly diabolical: a wretched woman was hired and sent to him, but no sooner had the holy priest looked at her, than he rebuked her with a severe countenance, and seeing that she would not leave his presence, he sprang up, seized her by the arm, put her out, and locked the door, in less time than it takes to tell.

The magistrates, too, soon began to cause him annoyance. The arrangements for the transfer of the hospital were no sooner set on foot, than opposition to the Institute began to be manifested in the Council-chamber. What foolishness to bring more monks into the country, it was said. Were there not too many already? Even those who were better disposed showed very plainly that it was the church and property of St. Mary's they wanted, and not the Institute of Charity. They next demanded from the new archpriest a sum of four hundred florins for the repairs done to the presbytery. In reply Rosmini wrote a straightforward and dignified protest, declaring that he would

provide the sum, not as archpriest, but as a citizen, if they were prepared to admit that the people of Rovereto either could not or would not provide the necessary funds themselves; and to prove that he had no self-interest in the matter, he set aside the entire sum in question to be used for the repair of St. Mark's, in case it were not accepted by the Corporation. When, later on, the Government refused to approve the Institute, and found that their eager and avaricious expectations were to be disappointed, signs of coldness or of animosity were more plainly manifested; and, as it usually happens where greed is not satisfied, all show of affection disappeared in a moment, and was succeeded by bitter and violent opposition.

Still more serious troubles were caused by the Curia and the Government. Rosmini had sent for Father Gentili in order to prepare him for the English mission, and asked the Curia to allow him to be employed in giving the spiritual exercises in the course of his stay. The reply was a peremptory refusal. About four months after his installation as archpriest, he renewed his request for a fourth assistant, but no answer was vouchsafed. Two months more having elapsed, he again represented his need in very moving terms; and then the Curia, apparently in contempt, sent him a notification to the effect that his most able assistant, Father Mantovani, was to be made parish priest of Isera at the beginning of Lent, just when his services would be most necessary at Rovereto. Father Rosmini did not fail to point out the injustice of this treatment, and for a time there was a lull, but after a brief respite, these petty vexations were renewed.

The Government eyed him with distrust, suspected that he intended to smuggle the Institute into Rovereto, and disliked his connection with the house at Calvario. Even the good effected by his zeal was considered obnoxious, as if it were dangerous to the public welfare! His passport to Ossola was first withdrawn on some trifling pretext, and when he next applied for one, it was refused. He was

forbidden to publish the *Regulations for the Classes of Christian Doctrine;*[1] there might be some peril to the State hidden even in them! But the evening Oratory was the chief pretence for persecuting this servant of God, and the ecclesiastical Court proved a docile instrument in the hands of the Government for accomplishing the work of its destruction.

Before the Oratory had been a fortnight in existence, it was reported to the authorities as a secret illegal assembly. It was easy for the archpriest to disprove the assertion and go on for a time as usual; but when the imperial decree arrived refusing to allow a house of the Institute to be opened in Rovereto, the Vicar turned coward, and instead of supporting the Oratory, began himself to complain of it to Father Rosmini. The latter explained the affair clearly, and earnestly recommended this good work, which he had so much at heart, to the Curia. A month of peace followed, but again the clouds gathered, and on the 1st of April the storm burst forth. A decree was sent to the Curia by the Government ordering the Oratory to be closed, the society of the Brothers of Charity in Rovereto to be dissolved, and all laymen who lived with them to be dismissed unless they had license from the Ordinary. The Curia submissively accepted the decree, and communicated it to the archpriest, urging him to comply at once. He wrote to the Commander of the circuit, stating that he was ready to close the Oratory that same evening; but in order to effect it quietly without rousing the populace, he begged to defer it till Wednesday in Holy Week: this was granted. As the Government seemed to disapprove of certain arrangements rather than of the Oratory itself, he then ventured to suggest to the Curia that it might be tolerated with some modifications, but no attention was paid to his proposal, and on Wednesday in Holy Week the Oratory was closed, to the great regret of all good

[1] *Regole della Dottrina Cristiana*, published by Pirotta, Milan, 1837, and in the *Catechetica* by Pogliani, Milan, 1838.

people, especially of the archpriest, who was heard to exclaim, "Now I can realise in some degree the meaning of *Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.*"

Besides the closing of the Oratory, the decree required the union of the Brothers of Charity to be dissolved. Rosmini replied that the three laymen were not members of the Institute except in desire, and that verbal permission had been given him to have them in residence; Father Gentili and Father Setti were merely on a visit; and as Father Puecher was his secretary, and helped him in parochial work, he begged to retain him. The Curia was inflexible, and insisted that every one of them should depart. However, Mgr. Tschiderer just then took possession of the diocese, and being more reasonable than his Vicar, allowed Father Puecher to return, and the three laymen also, provided they were not considered members of the Institute. Many and severe as were these trials, while others seemed likely to follow, they did not daunt the brave soul of Antonio Rosmini. "I am perfectly tranquil," he wrote, "and quite content with all that happens; I wish for nothing but the will of God." He would have liked to remain in the parish another year, so as to secure the permanency of the good he had effected; but, seeing that the Government would not allow him to return to Piedmont, and that the Bishop did not seem to understand the spirit of the Institute, he felt convinced that God willed him to resign the parish and devote himself to the Order. He wrote to Mgr. Tschiderer begging that he might be allowed to resign by 5th October, and on the 8th of August the Bishop accepted his resignation with expressions of regret.

We must not omit a touching work of charity—a painful one to Father Rosmini's affectionate heart—which was the crowning act of his parochial ministry, viz., his ministrations to an unfortunate youth, Felice Robol, condemned to death for the murder of his betrothed. Assisted by Father Puecher, he instructed the poor fellow in his religion, and in a very short space of time—so powerful was

the influence of Divine grace—the good pastor had the consolation of seeing him attain such a height of virtue as to become truly a martyr of justice and penitence. Having fortified him with the Holy Sacraments, Father Rosmini accompanied him to the scaffold, where, after the execution, he turned to the crowd, and pointing to the remains of Felice, addressed them in solemn and memorable words on the wickedness of parents who, by neglecting to bring their children up properly, may truly be called their murderers. Even the dead body of the poor man was the object of the archpriest's tender care; for after it had been interred, as the law required, in unconsecrated ground, he obtained leave to have it removed by night to holy ground.

On the 4th of October he preached his last sermon to his parishioners, the subject of this discourse being the intense power of the love of God and the love of our neighbour, a theme suggested by the Gospel of the Sunday; the following day he laid down his charge and retired to his paternal home. His ministry had lasted only a twelvemonth, yet he had accomplished the work of years in that short time. Some thought the year taken from his studies was wasted, but that opinion was not shared by the saintly priest himself, who valued the smallest act of virtue beyond the loftiest science of men or of angels. To me, the spectacle of a mighty genius stooping in his charity to the labour of instructing little children in their catechism, the philosopher who could produce the *Essay on the Origin of Ideas* instructing and consoling the farm labourer and the poor old woman with words of touching simplicity, the nobleman of the Holy Roman Empire not disdaining to mix with the humblest of the people, is a greater honour to the human race and a more salutary lesson than any book ever written.

Rosmini would have hastened at once to Calvario, but the necessary passport was delayed for several months; this interval of rest enabled him to prepare the *Essay on*

the Origin of Ideas for a second edition and to issue the *Revival of Philosophy* against Mamiani. On the 28th of April he went to Milan with Fathers Puecher and Fenner to despatch the printing of these two works and wait for the passport, which there was no chance of obtaining before May. On receipt of it, he passed a few days in retreat with the Oblate Fathers at Rho, and on the 18th of May he went on to Calvario with Father Puecher, leaving Father Fenner at Milan to attend to the printing.

We cannot refrain from noting how on this, as on many other occasions, the afflictions that overwhelmed him were powerless to disturb the serenity of his mind or his peace of soul. Great as were his trials, they appeared to have no power over his noble spirit, which, withdrawing itself from these painful impressions, could soar above them in heights which astonish us. He was always able to fix his gaze on the light of eternal truth, and rejoice in its ineffable splendour.

There are two things to which I should like to draw the attention of my readers before I conclude this chapter. One is, that though Rosmini was repaid only with ingratitude by many of his fellow-citizens, his love for Rovereto remained undiminished. He gave many proofs of this. We may mention the large donations he made to St. Mark's ; his successful efforts to acquire the church of St. Hilary, where he stationed a priest to serve the poor country people ; a large sum privately entrusted to one of the assistant priests to be distributed as alms ; and a legacy of 20,000 florins, which was called a " Perennial Interest Fund," intended for the support of a variety of good works. It was no fault of his if this scheme proved a failure.

The other fact worthy of remark is that many of his opponents ended badly. Scarcely two years had passed before the chief magistrates who were adverse to him died, and many witnesses testify to the sudden and unenviable death of the three Roveretans who had most obstinately

withstood him. People may call this an accident, fate, or chance, and misfortune must not hastily be regarded as a punishment; but the common people, who are quicker than the learned to see the hand of God in human events, looked upon it as the Divine vengeance vindicating the cause of His saintly servant.

CHAPTER XV

THE SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE (1830–1838)

A CONGREGATION of Sisters of Providence was established in France in the year 1762 by the Venerable Gian Martino Moye for the education of children, chiefly the poor, and for nursing the sick. The Revolution of 1789 dispersed these Sisters and sent their Founder into exile, where, on his deathbed, he recommended them as a precious inheritance to the Abbé Feys. When the storm had subsided, the good Abbé assembled them once more at Portieux, where they soon began to increase. In 1830, however, dark clouds once more appeared and the Abbé feared for their safety. Father Lowenbruck, who was preaching about this time in the Ossola valleys, and had there met with some good simple peasant girls whom he wished to train in the way of perfection, wrote to the Abbé Feys asking that they might be admitted into his Congregation. The latter in reply begged Father Lowenbruck to establish the Sisters of Providence in Italy if possible, that they might have a place of refuge if they were again exiled. Nothing could have pleased him better. The village girls were soon assembled in the old convent of St. Joseph at Domodossola, and a party of four were prepared and sent to Portieux to teach some Italian to the French Sisters, and receive in exchange a training in the spirit and form of their Congregation. Maria Alvazzi, Lucia Manciga, Seconda Allegranza, and Susanna Savio, four generous girls whose names deserve to be handed down to posterity, set off for France on the 26th of November 1831, accompanied by Lowenbruck to the confines of Switzerland, whence they continued their journey by themselves. The weather was cold,

the roads blocked with snow, and the poor things, as they had to trudge along on foot the greater part of the way, only reached Portieux on the 11th of December. Maria Alvazzi, the only one who had any education, began to teach Italian to her companions and two of the French nuns. The four postulants were pious, modest, diligent, and animated by holy joy, so that they filled the house with the good odour of Christ. The Superior thus speaks of them in a letter to Father Lowenbruck: "Your good postulants are so docile and solidly pious that they give entire satisfaction; in one word, there is no fault to find with them, and it is impossible to praise them too highly. The change of country and language has not in any way affected their evenness of mind: we wish all our novices were like them." Again, "Your four Italian Sisters are the edification of the house; they are perfectly happy, and lose no opportunity of improving themselves." In the meantime, encouraged by the Bishop of Como, Lowenbruck left no stone unturned to secure a foundation for the Sisters of Providence at Locarno in the Canton Ticino. In February 1832 he presented a compendium of the Rules for the approval of the Council of State, which he obtained, and also a confirmation of the same a little later by the Great Council. On the 15th of May, three of the girls at Domodossola went to Locarno under the escort of a good widow, the Abbé having gone a day in advance to secure a dwelling. The house he chose was an old hospital, and needed much more than a day to make it habitable. The unfortunate travellers arrived there on the 16th in the evening, wet through and sadly in need of refreshment, but they found neither food to revive them, nor fire to dry their drenched garments, nor a room that would protect them from the wind which came whistling through the broken panes. Father Lowenbruck soon appeared on the scene and got them something to eat for that evening; the next day a good woman gave them a bucket to draw water and a bundle of wood to make a little fire, besides which a small

alms enabled them to purchase the most necessary kitchen utensils. Their director addressed a short discourse to them, which brought tears to their eyes and encouraged them to endure their extreme poverty in a spirit of gratitude to God. He then appointed one of the three to be Superior, and assigned certain duties to each, giving them regulations for the exercises of work, study, and prayer in which the day was to be spent. The chief part of their labour was to cleanse the house from the rubbish which lay about and to cultivate the small garden ; their duties of piety were almost the same as those in use amongst the Brothers of the Institute of Charity. As soon as possible they prepared a small room for an oratory, but being entirely unprovided with church furniture, they were obliged to borrow what was necessary from the Canons or the Capuchins. Of study, they did but little: a good priest named Fornera came to train them as well as he could for teaching the infant schools they were expected to undertake. Possessing nothing but the clothing they wore, they managed to subsist on the alms collected by Lowenbruck or offered to them by some kindly soul: the chronicles of the Sisters, with that simplicity which is the evidence of truth, make small account of the labours, privations, and meagre fare of these young girls, whose health soon gave way. It was in this way that the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence came into existence—from the very beginning, poverty was its only wealth, its real wealth, because it becomes the mother and nurse of every virtue by drawing souls to Christ.

On the 3rd of July a second party went from Ossola to join the first three ; they were thirteen in number, and were conducted by Father Lowenbruck in person. Having crossed the lake they landed at Locarno towards evening in an unfrequented spot, so as to escape notice ; the news of their arrival, however, soon spread. A crowd of inquisitive idlers gathered to jeer at them, but a good lady allowed them to take shelter in her house until nightfall, when they could

enter the town unobserved. At the same time, the four who had gone to France returned with two French Sisters, Teodora Collin and Saveria Droim, one to be Superior and the other Mistress of Novices, in Italy. Father Lowenbruck went to meet them at the foot of Mount St. Gothard. After he had clothed the four Italian postulants, the novitiate was opened at Locarno on the 14th of July. This novitiate was a hard one to nature; the French Sisters must have found everything painful indeed, for they had exchanged a well-appointed convent for complete destitution, and the company of educated sisters for the society of poor peasant girls. Besides this, there was no priest in the neighbourhood who could speak their language; consequently they were obliged to undertake a long journey when they wanted to go to confession, or wait sometimes without going for a month. All had to undergo the rigours of poverty; they never tasted meat nor a drop of wine, even bread was sometimes wanting; it was only after some time that they were able to have some scraps of meat, and on account of their fatiguing work the mistresses were allowed half a glass of wine. Such a life of sacrifice imparted a masculine strength to their virtue, and drew down the blessing of God on the rising Institute.

So far, Rosmini had kept aloof; yet he took notice of his companion's movements, lest he should run to extremes, knowing well that though Lowenbruck was able to initiate pious works, he could never be depended on to establish them firmly, on account of the very fervour and impetuosity of his boundless zeal. The French Rev. Mother Collin wrote to Father Rosmini at the end of a month to explain the unsatisfactory state of affairs, adding a request that Father Gentili might direct the Sisters. Seeing himself thus compelled to take notice of Lowenbruck's imprudences, and entreated by the Sisters themselves to do so, he felt that he could not refuse without opposing the Will of God. His first thought was to give the pious Congregation a settled and permanent form. Father Lowenbruck, eager

to send out his Sisters in all directions, aimed at increasing their number—whether they were educated or not mattered little; he indeed said plainly that as there was in France a Society called Ignorantelli employed in the humblest kind of teaching, so he should like his Sisters to take the name of Ignorantine. Whether they brought anything to support themselves or not he never inquired. "Does charity ever die?" he would say. "And are they not to make poverty their delight?" This was not Father Rosmini's way. He feared large numbers, which too often are a cause of disturbance and confusion; he saw the danger of sending young Sisters here and there before they were well formed, and considered it was tempting God to make no provision for their subsistence. He therefore advised the Mother Superior to select the best of the novices and send away those who were not suitable, and for the future not to admit postulants so easily unless they had sufficient means to support them in a homely way, as well as the dispositions necessary for the religious life. He encouraged her also to open a school for girls, which was much needed in the place, and it was begun in the following November. When he saw how increasing difficulties discouraged her, he helped her with words of fatherly kindness. "I exhort you, dear Rev. Mother," he wrote, "to await in patience the moment fixed by God for granting you more abundant blessings. May God Himself be to you all in all."

These wise counsels and prudent arrangements placed the undertaking in a better position, but to give it real stability it was most necessary that the religious should have a clear and fixed Rule suitable to their vocation, for the French Rule, as it stood, was not likely to be serviceable in Italy.

Rosmini, therefore, resolved to make some changes, and to infuse into it the spirit of the Institute of Charity. To carry into practice this change of Rule needed infinite tact and prudence, in order to avoid wounding the feelings of the French Sisters, who, not wishing to adopt the new form,

finally returned to Portieux on the 15th of June 1833, with very affectionate and tender recollections of the good Italian Sisters. This reform created a similarity and union between the Institute of Charity and the Sisters of Providence; the two Institutes came to be, as it were, two branches of the one tree, drawing their sap from the same root, and being animated by the one life. Since woman, either on account of her weaker and more timid nature or because of the greater dangers which beset her in a wicked world, has need of special support, the Sisters of Providence called for a far more minute, assiduous, and engrossing care at the hands of their Father than the Institute of Charity itself. But from the day that Providence placed them in his hands, Rosmini was never wanting in his care of these spiritual daughters; he loved them with a holy affection, consoled them, encouraged them, and fearlessly took their part when the great ones of the world oppressed them.

Historical truth compels us to touch here on a serious trouble which God permitted them to experience in 1834, not through any ill will on the part of the Marquis Barolo, but apparently from his eccentricity of character. It will be remembered that he had asked for Sisters to teach an infants' school in his own mansion at Turin. His request was granted, on the understanding that it was to be a school for girls only; but when it was found that boys were admitted, Father Rosmini respectfully, but firmly, intimated to the Marquis that for the future he would not send any more Sisters except to teach the girls. The Marquis was offended, and made endless complaints and extraordinary demands. The Father had withdrawn two of the three peasant girls first sent by Father Lowenbruck, because they were unequal to the duties, and replaced them by others better prepared. The third, Maria Antonietti, though not better educated than her companions, was endowed by nature with greater intelligence and singular

prudence. After a time she was recalled to Locarno to go through a short novitiate, and received the religious habit with the name of Sister Giovanna. In the April following she was sent back to Turin to open an infants' school in the house of the Countess Valperga di Masino, and at the same time to superintend the Barolo school. Rosmini endeavoured to show the Marquis that some of his demands were unreasonable, and would involve a complete change in the nature of the Institute; but, far from being appeased, he became more angry, and threatened to carry his complaints to the King and get the matter settled. Rosmini at once furnished full information to the Minister Lascarène as well as to Cardinal Morozzo, who had entire authority over the religious Orders in Piedmont, and begged them to support the cause of the Sisters. The Marquis, at last, finding him inflexible, resolved to found an Order himself, and fashion a new Congregation to his own taste. It is painful to relate the efforts he made by promises, allurements, and threats to get the Sisters at Turin to separate from the Institute at Locarno. Their sense of duty upheld them in this struggle, and their good Father encouraged them by his letters to remain faithful to obedience. Their distress of mind was great; Sister Giovanna, the mistress of the school, probably from this cause, fell dangerously ill, but as soon as she was convalescent, she took a bold step, which showed her manly strength of character. Alone, and without a word to any one except the second Sister, she set off to Domodossola, where Father Lowenbruck was director, and thence went on to Locarno. The Sister remaining at Turin still endured the same treatment, until, finding her immovable in her attachment to her vocation, they one morning sent her off in a conveyance to rejoin her companion.

Such was the end of this trial; but trials are the thorns that protect the flower and make it bloom later on with greater beauty and fragrance. Now that these difficulties

were over, the Sisters of Providence began to spread by degrees throughout Piedmont, everywhere sought after and blessed. At Locarno they took care of the sick in the hospital, besides teaching the girls' schools. In 1833 they went to Turin to take charge of the schools at Casa Masino, and in the same year the schools at Intragna in the diocese of Novara and others at Casale were entrusted to them. In 1834 three more were added to the list—Chieri, Stresa (where a house was provided by Madame Bolongaro), and Domodossola. In 1835 they made a foundation at Biella, and in 1857 at Cavergno in the Canton of Ticino, so that in 1838, when Pope Gregory XVI. approved the Institute of Charity, the Sisters of Providence had already nine establishments. Their chief establishment, or Central House, was transferred in 1837 from Locarno to a convent at Domodossola, which had formerly belonged to the Ursulines, and was given to the Sisters by Count Mellerio. Sister Giovanna Antonietti was appointed Superior by Rosmini on account of the evident proofs she had given of prudence, fortitude, and other solid virtues; and with the exception of one year she held the office until her death, thirty-five years later, ever a model of gentleness and goodness.[1] Father Rosmini continued to infuse his spirit into the Sisters by his instructions in word and in writing, with such good result that these spiritual daughters bore a striking resemblance to their Father. It may be that this likeness of spirit was the chief reason why the people began to call them *Rosminian Sisters*, against which the good Father, in dismay, stoutly protested, but the name clung to them notwithstanding.

It may be well here to say something of the nature and scope of this branch of the Institute of Charity, which Father Rosmini declares, in the *Constitutions* he wrote for them, to be quite distinct from the French Sisters of Pro-

[1] A Memoir of Suor Giovanna Antonietti, by Don Francesco Paoli, was published at Rovereto in 1882.

vidence, because their rules are different, and altogether in conformity with the spirit of the Institute of Charity. He also placed them under the Superior-General of the Fathers, who was to provide a Director for each Central House and secure for them all necessary assistance for the transaction of business in connection with their foundations. New establishments were only to be opened when asked for by ecclesiastical authorities, and under certain prudent regulations.

The end of the Institute is the sanctification of its members by the exercise of the virtues of the hidden life, which is their essential state. When Providence calls the Sisters to work for their neighbour, they enter on the various works of charity undertaken by women, such as the education of girls, giving instruction in Christian doctrine, visiting the sick and the poor, nursing the sick in hospitals, and receiving ladies who wish to make retreats in their Central Houses. To denote the humble spirit of self-sacrifice which should animate them, Father Rosmini gave his Sisters the beautiful title of *Poor servants of the servants of the poor*, which they have always cherished, and he consecrated them to Jesus Christ Crucified and His most sorrowful Mother. He wished them to have a large-hearted and tender love for the poor of Christ, to act as mothers towards orphans and as sisters towards widows, while they should endeavour to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of the poor by every means in their power. This charity, he tells them, is to be universal, without limits, except those assigned by the Providence of God, whose will is made known to them by obedience. They may therefore be called upon to go to any part of the world, and to undertake a great variety of charitable works for women of every social grade. These works he directs them to enter upon with great courage and confidence in the Divine assistance, looking for no earthly reward, but relying on the Providence of their heavenly Father, which, he says, is the foundation of

the whole Society. On his deathbed he addressed the following words, full of deep spiritual wisdom, to the Central Superior, Sister M. Giovanna : " The Sisters of Providence will flourish in proportion as they cultivate the spirit of simplicity and poverty." This was the abridgment of all he had taught them, viz., to be simple in their perfect faith in the Providence of God, and completely detached from all things here below, that they may be the more closely united to the Divine Spouse of their souls.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ENGLISH MISSION (1830–1838)

When Gentili was studying theology in 1830 at the Irish College in Rome, he made the acquaintance of an English prelate, Mgr. Baines, Bishop of Siga and Vicar Apostolic of the Western District, who invited him to accept a post in the College of Prior Park near Bath. This Bishop's ready wit, fluent speech, bright and animated manner gave him a certain charm, but his great qualities were marred by a rigid adherence to his own opinion, and such inflexibility of will as to render it almost impossible for those connected with him to avoid offending him. This was the cause of failure in many of the good works he undertook, for his best friends abandoned him. Leo XII. wished to make him the first English Cardinal, but Pope Gregory XVI., who knew him better, had to summon him to Rome for a fatherly reproof. Such was the prelate who invited Gentili both by word of mouth and by writing to come to England. The Father told him that he was not his own master, but held out some hope that, later on, the Institute might comply with his desires. After his ordination, Gentili had another very pressing invitation to go to England, from Mr. Ambrose Phillips de Lisle, a young English convert, who wished to establish a mission in Leicestershire for the benefit of the Catholics in that part of the country. He wrote on the subject to Father Rosmini, who answered at once that the English Catholics were very dear to his heart, and he would willingly shed his blood for them, but the first thing to be done was to consult God peacefully in prayer. Satan, anticipating the loss he was soon to sustain, tried to arouse suspicions in Mr. Phillips de Lisle's mind against the In-

stitute. A certain prelate represented the members to him as a sect of Manichees, trying to reform the Church on Luther's plan. A certain religious man, who was desirous of establishing his own Order in England, chimed in with the assertion that in the maxims of the Institute he saw the germs of "Quietism." Another, affecting to take a more moderate view, contented himself with exaggerating the difficulties in the way of its approval by the Holy See. Fortunately, Mr. Phillips de Lisle could easily ascertain the truth, being then in Rome. The Cardinal-Vicar, Cardinal Zurla, spoke of the Institute in terms of high commendation, and the Holy Father had just bestowed his blessing on it in a Brief which spoke of it as "piously devoted to his person," so that there was evidently no ground for alarm. In May 1831 Mr. Phillips de Lisle had the good fortune to meet Rosmini himself at Milan, and they were soon united in a holy friendship which made him long still more to have some members of the Institute for the English mission. On his return to England he saw Mgr. Walsh, Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District, and offered to provide a chapel and a house for the Institute at Loughborough; the Bishop, much pleased, gave permission to the Rev. T. Hulme to collect alms for the purpose. But the devil made use of an Italian religious to spread a report that the Institute was in some way connected with the French Sansimonians, and the calumny had such an effect that Mr. Hulme was induced to devote his collection to another purpose, while Mgr. Walsh himself was thrown into a state of perplexity. Rosmini, on hearing of this from Mr. Phillips de Lisle, replied, "I make little account of the suspicions spread by that religious, horrible though they be. I believe he does it through zeal. It is true the devil can play ugly tricks upon us, but only so far as God permits and no further; therefore, I remain tranquil in the hands of Divine Providence."

The Providence of God, which allowed these vexations to arise, was meanwhile preparing another means for establishing the Order in England. Sir Henry Trelawney,

already known to the reader, maintained a mission at Trelawney Castle, his own seat in the Western District, and, knowing Father Gentili, he began to think of confiding it to the Institute. He wrote in April 1833 to Mgr. Baines, Vicar Apostolic of the Western District, and then to Father Rosmini. The Bishop expressed himself willing, provided the Holy See were favourable to the Institute; whereupon Sir Henry went to Rome and obtained a *Rescript* from the Holy Father declaring his satisfaction. Rosmini on his part expressed his readiness to comply with the Baronet's wishes, if the Bishop showed himself favourably disposed towards the Institute, and in order that he might not act in the dark, sent his lordship the *Constitutions* to be examined at leisure.

Things had reached this point when the Bishop himself came forward, claiming that he had invited Father Gentili to England before Mr. Phillips de Lisle or Sir Henry Trelawney. No doubt the request of a Bishop ought to take precedence, but it seemed hard to disappoint the two gentlemen who had been foremost in making definite arrangements for the Institute in England. Mgr. Baines had, however, already persuaded Mr. Phillips de Lisle to yield in favour of Sir Henry Trelawney's mission, but the latter was unwilling to waive his claim. This obstacle was soon removed, for about this time God called the pious baronet to Himself, and now Mgr. Baines alone asked the Fathers to come to the Western District. During his visit to Rome in 1834 for the business of his diocese, he received still further assurances of the Holy Father's benevolent interest in the Institute of Charity. Having examined the *Constitutions*, he declared them worthy of the highest praise, and expressed his admiration of the spirit of piety and charity which they breathed throughout, as well as of the singular spirit of prudence so indispensable at the present day. In September, on his way back from Rome, he called at Calvario to make final arrangements with Gentili for Prior Park, Father Rosmini being absent at Rovereto. The Bishop on this

occasion expressed the conviction he had formed when reading the *Constitutions*, that the Institute would prove eminently beneficial to religion and adapted to the needs of the Church: he also cordially promised it his support and protection. Before sending off this little colony, Father Rosmini, for greater security, asked a final word from the Sovereign Pontiff, who in a Brief dated December 1834 left the matter entirely to his prudence. Being now convinced that it was the Will of God, he chose Father Gentili with two French members, Father Rey and Brother Belisy, a cleric, and when he considered them sufficiently prepared, he wrote a decree addressed to Gentili, appointing him Superior of the mission. This decree, admirable for its wisdom, may be read in Rosmini's Letters,[1] and also in the life of Father Gentili.

The departure of three missionaries to teach in a college may appear a small thing in itself, and yet Father Rosmini hoped this humble beginning might be the source of great benefit to the English nation, so mighty in a worldly point of view, but so far removed from the true grandeur which the Faith alone imparts. He would have his three sons who were destined for England go first to kneel at the feet of Christ's Vicar, in testimony of the reverence of the Institute for the power of the Keys, and receive their mission from the Holy Father himself, and ask his blessing that they might worthily carry it out. The little party set out for Rome at the beginning of May, and their audience with the Pope was affectionate beyond expression. Father Gentili entered first and presented some books sent by Rosmini, together with a letter stating the object of their visit, and also that they were to teach philosophy and theology in Mgr. Baines's seminary. "I am glad," said the Pope, "because you will teach sound doctrine." He made minute inquiries about Rosmini, and finding he had no intention of coming to Rome, the Holy

[1] *Letters of Antonio Rosmini-Serbati*, English translation, published by Washbourne, 1901.

Father said, with a smile, "He is afraid of incurring expense here, to the detriment of the works of charity our Lord has placed in his hands." He then referred to the approval of the Institute, which, he said, ought to be decided upon, as several Bishops had examined and approved the *Constitutions*. In conclusion, he raised his hands over them and said, "May the Lord open to you a large field for good, and bless you, help you, and prosper you." A few days later, when about to weigh anchor at Civita Vecchia on their return to Calvario, our missionaries had the unexpected good fortune to see the Pope again and receive his blessing. And as if this were not enough, the Holy Father deigned to send a *Brief*, thanking Rosmini for the books presented to him, and renewing his blessing and his good wishes for the prosperity of the undertaking.

On the 5th of June Gentili and his companions continued their journey, and having crossed the Simplon went on their way to England. On the 20th Mgr. Baines received them very kindly at Bath, and as their residence at Prior Park was not ready, they were taken, at the Bishop's suggestion, to stay at Trelawney Castle and console the family, then grieving sorely over the death of Sir Henry.

It will be well, perhaps, to take note of the condition of Catholics in England at that time, if we wish to understand the importance attached to such an apparently insignificant event as the arrival of these three members of the Institute in this country. The so-called Reformation, which wrenched the Island of Saints from the unity of the Church, was followed by a fierce persecution, resembling that of Julian, and even that of Nero himself. Tyrannical laws deprived faithful Catholics of the ordinary rights of citizens; the Parliaments and public offices were closed to them; monasteries were suppressed to fill the royal coffers, ecclesiastical benefices were confiscated, and private property seized; attendance at Mass was punished with fines and imprisonment, and its celebration, in the case of

priests, with death. It is true that a sense of humanity had by degrees secured a mitigation of these laws, but they were not abrogated until the nineteenth century. The sense of liberty which had sprung up after the great changes of the previous century, reawakened in the hearts of Catholics a sense of their rights, and they rose to demand them under O'Connell, the great Irish leader, a man who displayed in this vigorous agitation something of the spirit of Peter the Hermit or Savonarola, though in his crusade no blood was shed. To the intelligent and untiring labours of this wonderful man is mainly due the *Emancipation Act* of 1829, which restored to Catholics their social rights, and opened a new era in their history. At the same time Dr. Pusey and other learned men at Oxford began a movement for the study of the Primitive Church, which, instead of renewing the youth of Protestantism as they had hoped, was the occasion of the return to the true faith of many men of upright mind and heart, such as Newman, Faber, Manning, Lockhart, and other Anglicans. Such was the condition of the Church in England when the little colony of the Institute arrived, and if we call to mind the coming of forty monks sent from Italy twelve centuries earlier by Pope St. Gregory the Great to sow the seeds of the Gospel in England, and notice that it is another Gregory who sends three humble brethren from Italy to root out the thorns and briars of heresy which had overrun this fruitful soil, we may consider the coincidence a happy augury for the result of their labours in the interests of Catholicity.

The short stay of the brethren at Trelawney Castle was not without fruit. Father Gentili preached and taught Catechism in the Chapel. Protestants as well as Catholics came to hear him, and one young person was received into the Church, the first-fruits of the harvest he was soon to reap. His two brethren, after making a short retreat, set to work to learn English. Three weeks elapsed before they went to their quarters at Prior Park, an ancient priory which Mgr. Baines had lately restored to the Church,

adding two fine colleges, St. Peter's for secular students and St. Paul's as an ecclesiastical seminary. Father Gentili was appointed Professor of Philosophy and Literature; here he taught the doctrines of the *New Essay on the Origin of Ideas* with such success, that the other professors asked the Bishop as a favour to allow them to attend the lectures. Father Rey taught Moral Theology and Brother Belisy gave lessons in French. The Bishop was so well satisfied from the first that he commissioned Father Gentili to preach to the clerics, hear their confessions, and instruct them in the art of preaching, in the sacred chant, and in the ceremonies of the Church. Indeed, he would have made Father Gentili rector of St. Paul's College could he have prevailed on him to accept the office; but the following year, when Mgr. Baines urged Rosmini to allow the appointment, the latter left it to his discretion, and Gentili was soon installed. During Lent 1836, Father Gentili preached a retreat to the professors and students with extraordinary fruit; it may have been on this occasion that the seed of a vocation to the Institute was sown in the hearts of Fathers Hutton and Furlong, who became later on two pillars of the Order in England. The labours of our brethren, being confined to the two colleges, could produce little fruit amongst Protestants, still there are a few instances of conversions effected at this period by Father Gentili.

We must not imagine that Father Rosmini did not share in the good work carried on here; he was, in fact, a powerful co-operator by his constant correspondence, directing his sons with the utmost care in spiritual matters, in discipline, in their connection with seculars, and even in their method of teaching. Want of space does not allow us to insert many of his letters, which are remarkable for their exquisite prudence and charity, and in which he shows the brethren how to accommodate themselves by degrees to English customs in all that is not blameworthy, so as to be more helpful to the people, and to live in perfect union

with each other as children of peace. We shall only quote one remarkable passage in a letter to Rey: "What I desire is charity, not learning. I have a great dread of learning, but a great love for charity. God grant that learning may never be a source of division amongst us! God grant that charity may edify and unite us all in Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom alone be all honour and glory for ever! Love Christ and God in your companions. You should be full of love and compassion for them, and desire ardently all sanctity for them as for yourself. Love, tranquillity, and peace will lead to humility and to the most docile and perfect obedience." With all his loving care the Father could not keep Rey in the Institute; he was not a professed member, and left in March 1837. This departure and the pressing solicitations of Mgr. Baines induced him to send over two other small detachments of his subjects: Father Pagani with three lay-brothers came in July, and they were followed in October by Fathers Rinolfi and Signini. Father Pagani was Professor of Dogmatic Theology, Rinolfi of German, and Signini of Physics. Rosmini was always with them in spirit; he desired all, even the lay-brothers, to send him minute details of everything, and he in return wrote very frequently to console and encourage them, and inspire them with that faith in Divine Providence which was the very breath of his own soul. His letters to Father Gentili are the strongest proofs of this lively faith, which is also shown in a very marked degree in the little work entitled *Spiritual Admonitions*.[1]

Until the beginning of 1837 Father Gentili had enjoyed the entire confidence of Bishop Baines, who called him an angel sent by God to his district, and the zealous missionary, profiting by this good understanding, succeeded in improving the entire aspect of the two colleges at Prior Park. The change roused the envy of some, who represented him to the Bishop as an austere man, full of exaggerated piety, quite unsuited to the English character;

[1] *Avvisi Spirituali*, published at Turin, 1890, by V. Bona.

and when the school re-opened with fewer students they at once exclaimed that Father Gentili's indiscreet severity had frightened them away. Mgr. Baines took alarm, and hastened to curtail his authority in the college and undo much of the good he had accomplished. Slander soon betrays itself, however, and in a few months the students numbered more than in the previous year, so that the Bishop's confidence was restored, and he severely reproved the calumniators. Yet some trace of the prejudice he had formed must have remained in his mind, for calumny, like oil on a garment, is not easily cleansed, and leaves some mark, and undoubtedly Father Gentili's piety was of a very different character from that of Mgr. Baines. The first, a Roman by birth, education, and affection, liked the large-hearted, expansive, and tender Italian devotions; the Bishop, who had been brought up amongst a less demonstrative people, chilled by a Protestant atmosphere, liked a more set form of devotion kept within very strict bounds. Rosmini had warned the young and ardent priest to be prudent, still he may now and then have been carried too far. On the other hand, Mgr. Baines certainly went to the opposite extreme, for Pope Gregory XVI. found it necessary to point out his error to him.

The Bishop's discontent was increased when some of his clergy asked to be admitted into the Institute; people told him he would soon be short of priests, and quite at the mercy of the Institute. It was a false alarm, for Father Rosmini had clearly explained and adduced facts to show how the connection of the Institute with the Bishop might be so arranged as to provide for their mutual interests,[1] but this did not remove his jealousy and distrust. On the closing of the schools, Father Gentili went to Trelawney Castle to reconcile two families at variance, and Mgr. Baines sent him on from there to settle some differences in a Trappist convent at Blandford, and thence to Spettisbury,

[1] See letters to Mgr. Tschiderer, Sept. 28, 1835, and to Mgr. Baines, May 18, 1839.

a remote part of his district, to serve a convent of Canonesses of St. Augustine. He seemed to breathe more freely now that Gentili was gone, and as he could do better with Father Pagani he soon asked, and in fact insisted, that Rosmini should allow him to take Gentili's place. Even this change did not quite restore the Institute to his favour, and after dragging on for a couple of years, it was found necessary to leave the Western for the Midland District. This apparently unfortunate and humiliating change was intended by Providence for the greater good of the Order; the work of our missionaries, once they were free from the restrictions of the College, extended rapidly, and bore abundant fruit. Father Gentili alone, in less than eight years of apostolic labour, gathered hundreds of Protestants into the fold of Christ, and God alone can tell how many thousands of negligent Catholics he brought back to a truly Christian life. The name of the saintly Roman priest is still venerated by good souls in the places where he preached, as a sweet and consoling memory.

Our reflections have carried us somewhat far into our narrative; we may now look back once more on the humble beginnings of the English mission and the events which led up to it, and comparing them with the glorious results it produced, admire the action of God's Providence, and the way in which His magnificent designs are brought about by the feeblest means. Who can count the souls that have been led from darkness to light by means of the members of the Institute of Charity in England? Yet they might have been still in the shadow of death, but for the series of disappointments which led a young Roman lawyer to forsake the world and cast himself, in spite of reluctant nature, on the charity of a priest almost a stranger to him, one who was intended by Providence to be his spiritual Father, and lead him to the lofty heights of charity amidst the poverty of Calvary. Truly does Providence delight *to play in this* tiny *world*[1] of ours!

[1] Prov. viii. 30.

CHAPTER XVII

THE ABBEYS OF TAMIÉ AND SAN MICHELE (1835–1838)

Upon a mountain in the diocese of Chambéry and on the confines of that of Annecy stands an ancient Cistercian Abbey, called by the people *Tamié*, and in Latin *Stamedium*, from its position between the dioceses. Its first Abbot was St. Peter of Tarentaise, who sowed the seeds of eminent virtue in the monks under his rule ; but the French Revolution came to disturb the peace which had reigned for centuries in this monastery, and the brethren, once dispersed, were never able to return. In 1830 Carlo Felice, King of Sardinia, made over the noble Abbey with the few possessions rescued from plunder, to Mgr. Martinet, Archbishop of Chambéry, who installed there some missionary priests to preach in various parts of his diocese. After a few years they left, and the Archbishop, who had heard of the great fruit produced by Father Lowenbruck's preaching amongst the clergy of Aosta, began to think of securing members of the Institute of Charity for Tamié. At the beginning of 1835 he wrote on the subject to Cardinal Morozzo and to Father Rosmini; then, to hasten matters, he requested Cardinal Castracane to speak to the Pope about it. Rosmini hesitated, and in order to gain time, sent the *Constitutions* to the Archbishop that he might examine them. The latter, having examined them, gave his decree of approbation on the 25th of March 1835. In the meantime Cardinal Castracane represented to Rosmini that the undertaking would be very agreeable to the Holy Father, and on hearing this he concluded that it was the will of God, and accepted the work. Being detained in the Tyrol by the Austrian Government, he sent Lowenbruck to visit

the place, with Molinari as his companion, to restrain his impetuosity by prudent counsel. They found the Abbey amply provided with furniture and all necessaries, and went on to the Archbishop's residence, where an agreement was drawn up; the Bishop granting to the Institute the Abbey, with its furniture and other goods, for the use of the missionaries to be located there by the Institute for the benefit of his diocese. The agreement having been ratified, Father Rosmini opened the house at Tamié in August of the same year by sending four missionaries, Fathers Lowenbruck, Martin, Julien, and Flecchia, with two lay-brothers.

Father Lowenbruck, as rector, received the necessary instructions from his Superior, and amongst other things a recommendation to keep the Institute in humility, not even to name it without necessity; and, in his missionary work, to abstain from dramatic and showy demonstrations, taking for his model the simplicity and gravity of our Lord's preaching. His words were: "We should always have Jesus Christ before us; He is the Missioner we are to imitate. His preaching was free from all that show and noisy demonstration employed by some missionaries in modern times; it was simple, full of sweetness, wisdom, and holiness." The Fathers soon began to teach the poor shepherd boys, and to give instructions to grown-up persons on Sundays; when winter came on, they went out to give missions in the various parts of the diocese. The Archbishop assisted them in many ways with fatherly kindness, and wrote of all to Father Rosmini in the highest terms, especially of Father Lowenbruck, who was, he said, "the soul of the missions, full of zeal, wonderful in his power of reclaiming sinners, indefatigable, a perfect treasure." It was only in the July of 1836 that Rosmini obtained a passport, and hastened without delay to visit his spiritual sons and encourage them in their holy work. On his return journey to Calvario he went to Annecy to venerate the relics of St. Francis of Sales and of St. Jane

Frances de Chantal, and at San Maurizio he visited the resting-place of the Martyrs of the Theban Legion.

The missions went on in Savoy, but it was found impossible to establish a College of Missionaries at Tamié as had been intended. There were inevitable dangers, for missions were only given in the winter time, when the people were free from country labour; the priests would then have to retire to the Abbey for the greater part of the year, leading the life of anchorets in prayer and study, or devote themselves to temporal affairs, or lead an idle life. Rosmini foresaw the difficulty and warned his priests; he advised them to take advantage of the leisure to work at their own sanctification, to arrange the archives and the library, to post up the accounts, to assemble for a class of sacred eloquence, and to prepare good sermons, the house being a College for Missionaries. The Father's wise counsels were, however, ineffectual. Father Julien, unable to endure the solitude and the rigorous poverty, wavered in his vocation and finally left. Even Father Lowenbruck lost courage when there were no missions in prospect. Ere long they began to be too much engrossed in looking after the property, the cattle, the fields, and the haymaking; things apt to dissipate the mind and lead to relaxation of discipline. Rosmini, fearing the ruin of community life, determined to apply a prompt remedy. He ordered Father Lowenbruck to keep no cattle, and to retain only one horse, directed him to let the farms and to lessen expenses, adding that he would supply their needs if the income were insufficient. He also wrote to the Archbishop requesting him to relieve the Fathers from the care of temporal affairs, especially Father Lowenbruck, who, on previous occasions, had not been successful in the management of business. The Archbishop quite understood the situation, and appointed a priest to act as administrator of the temporalities at Tamié.

But whisperers now began to say that Father Lowenbruck was to be removed from Tamié, and to circulate other

reports which annoyed the Archbishop and lessened his friendship for Rosmini. There is reason to believe that these rumours were partly due to Lowenbruck's own representations to the Archbishop; he was so imaginative, and so anxious to be up and doing after his own fashion, so full of strange ideas, and of ways, plans, and little tricks for carrying them out, that Tamié was not at all to his taste, and he was evidently preoccupied with some new project. His Superior thought it would be an outlet for his energy if he were appointed to go to England as Visitor, and he lavished tokens of esteem and affection on him to bring him to a better frame of mind. As though he read his thoughts, Rosmini repeatedly invited him to come to Calvario, as much might be settled in a personal interview; but this he avoided. At every word of complaint, however mild, he would threaten to leave the Institute, which deeply pained Rosmini. Instead of going to Calvario Father Lowenbruck one day called Father Flecchia (a good, pious priest, who was very much in his way), and said to him, "Take this letter to Calvario; I cannot trust it to the post." The good priest took the letter and set off alone, without even a bag, on his six days' march to carry a letter! The letter was to inform Father Rosmini that the Archbishop was very much displeased at the report that Father Lowenbruck was to leave Tamié. Rosmini's reply was even milder than usual, and there was no allusion to the ruse employed, charity inducing him to act with great gentleness, so as not to break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax. Very soon, however, he received another letter from his wayward son, stating that he could remain no longer in such a *purgatory*, that he would go off quietly to France, and then write to tell the Archbishop that he had left; in fact, he set out for France without even waiting for an answer, undertook to preach a course of Lenten sermons there, and sent in his resignation to Mgr. Martinet. Before closing the house Rosmini wrote to ascertain the Archbishop's wishes, and whether it would be possible to make

another attempt; but Mgr. Martinet had placed all his confidence in Lowenbruck, and refused his sanction. At the beginning of 1839, therefore, the Institute left Tamié after a stay of three years and a half, with a considerable pecuniary loss, to which the Founder submitted in peace and silence rather than enter into a contest with the Archbishop of Chambéry.

Another Abbey still more illustrious for its antiquity and historical interest was offered to the Institute in the same year as Tamié. This was San Michele della Chiusa in Piedmont, erected in the tenth century by Hugh of Montboissier on the steep summit of Mount Pirchiriano between Susa and Turin. The name of *Pirchiriano* (*Fire of the Lord*) was given to the mountain on account of the flames which seemed to envelop the peak when its little chapel was consecrated, tradition says, by the hands of angels; the traces of the mysterious rite are said to have been visible on its walls when Ansone, Archbishop of Turin, arrived on the following day for the dedication. San Michele was one of the four great Benedictine abbeys in Italy, though its past was not wholly glorious. In its most flourishing days there were as many as three hundred monks within its walls; there the sciences were cultivated and the *Laus perennis* was kept up. In the course of time monastic discipline relaxed, and Pope Urban VI. in 1379 took away from the monks their right of election, together with a large portion of their property, which was conferred on a Commendatory Abbot appointed by the Count of Savoy. When their wealth once more increased, discipline again declined, and after some ineffectual attempts at reform, Sixtus V. in 1586 forbade the monks to receive novices, and Gregory XV. in 1622 suppressed the religious Community and assigned the revenues to a College of Canons to be established at Giaveno. Commendatory Abbots, however, still continued to be appointed.

In 1835 Charles Albert, King of Piedmont, a man endowed with a noble spirit and the faith of the early

Christian times, grieving to see so noted a place falling to decay, thought of entrusting it to some religious Congregation, who would restore the Divine worship in its deserted Basilica and be the guardians of the tombs of so many princes of Savoy who were buried there. He also hoped to see it become a retreat for the rich and great who, disenchanted with the world, might wish to end their days in retirement. This thought, worthy of a king, he communicated to Cardinal Tadini, Archbishop of Genoa, who without hesitation proposed to confide the Abbey to the Institute of Charity. Charles Albert, pleased with the proposal, desired the Cardinal to arrange the matter with Rosmini, who, seeing that the excellent and charitable work proposed was quite in accordance with the spirit of the Institute, accepted it on condition that a little time should be allowed him to prepare subjects for the undertaking. Meanwhile the King, in order to hasten the arrangements, freed the Abbey, which was a *commendum* of the Abate of Bricherasio, conferred on him another in its stead, and begged Father Rosmini to send a few members of the Institute to begin without delay the most pressing work.

In May 1836 Rosmini succeeded in getting a passport for Piedmont from the Austrian Government, and in June went to Turin to attend to the business in person. He conferred first with Cardinals Morozzo and Tadini, then with the Ministers, and finally with the King himself, who received him graciously, explained his project, and obtained a permit from the Austrian Government allowing him to reside ten years in the Sardinian States, the long-delayed passport being only for six months. He then went on to San Michele with the King's Administrator-General and his architect. He found the place adapted for a religious community, but without suitable accommodation for the guests who were to be received, and stated the conditions on which an agreement might be come to. His Majesty ordered the architect to proceed with the necessary improvements, and meanwhile applied to the Sovereign Pontiff to

obtain his approval. The Holy Father replied by a Brief dated August 23, 1836, in which he passed a high encomium upon the King's projects, and repeated his former praise of the Institute, granting the Order permission to occupy the Abbey of San Michele, and to receive and administer the property and emoluments attached to it as long as they should remain there.

In October Rosmini sent twelve of his subjects, and intimated the fact to Mgr. Cirio, Bishop of Susa, asking him to take the new house under his protection, and requesting him at the same time to give his approval to the *Constitutions*, if he thought well. The Bishop manifested much goodwill, and soon after sent a very favourable report on the *Constitutions*.

On the 25th of October, by the King's desire, the first solemn function was performed at San Michele. The pious monarch had the remains of a number of his ancestors removed with great pomp and ceremony from the crypt of the Cathedral at Turin to this ancient Abbey. Twenty-two coffins were accompanied by the clergy and royal officials and deposited at San Michele, where they could be more honourably interred, and where the souls of the departed would receive the benefit of prayer and suffrage. Great numbers of people assisted at the solemn rites, which have been celebrated annually ever since. Later on, in 1856, Victor Emmanuel had a beautiful crypt hewn out under the church, and there these remains are now laid in stone sarcophagi, adorned with Latin epitaphs by Cibrario. Two days after the ceremonies were over, Father Rosmini came to visit the house, and went away satisfied that everything was going on well.

Father Puecher was appointed rector of the house, and also took charge of the novices who were transferred thither. His natural aptitude for the latter office made Father Rosmini say that he was one sent by God. Through his efforts the novitiate at San Michele attained a degree of vigorous and lasting perfection, and sent out such men

as Pagani, Rinolfi, Signini, Narchialli, Toscani, and others remarkable for wisdom and virtue. Besides the duties of the interior life, peculiar to the novitiate, they undertook some external labours of charity, such as officiating in the church, attending to the spiritual wants of the sick in the neighbourhood, teaching schools for poor children, giving the spiritual exercises to priests and secular persons, preaching retreats in seminaries, and assisting in the neighbouring parishes. Thus it was that the ancient sanctuary of San Michele once more became an object of veneration, and the practice of Christian piety revived in the surrounding country.

The great expectations raised in Father Rosmini by the King's promises were only partially fulfilled; not through any fault of his Majesty but from other causes, chiefly the discontent of the Administrator and that grasping spirit which often characterises such officials. Disappointed with the first part of the work, which was ill done and handsomely paid for, he tried to throw the greater part of the expenses, upwards of 4000 lire, on the Institute. Then came other annoying impositions: 1000 lire must be spent on repairing an old cistern, which after all gave them only a scanty supply of bad water; pretexts were alleged for withholding papers and documents appertaining to the Abbey; but Rosmini, patient as ever, preferred to suffer loss rather than to go to law, and contented himself with a mild expostulation addressed to Cardinals Morozzo and Tadini, that they might know what was going on and might ask to have it remedied.

His chief aim, however, was to establish the retreat for gentlemen, which had been the pious King's main object in placing the Institute at San Michele. Melano, the King's architect, had drawn up the plans, Rosmini himself framed the regulations for the guests, and persons desirous of such a haven of peace were not wanting, but the place still remained untouched. The Father laid the case before the Duke Laval de Montmorency and the two friendly Cardinals,

that they might call the sovereign's attention to it; later on, he addressed a memorial to Charles Albert himself, begging to be informed whether his Majesty had changed his plan. The King assured him that he was still of the same mind; nevertheless, the times were so unfavourable that the charitable project could not be carried into effect. In 1838 the novitiate was removed from San Michele; some years later the scholastics were sent there, and a certain number of priests always remained to supply the local needs. In 1844 a Sodality of Missionaries, with Statutes of their own, approved by the Bishop in 1846, was established under his lordship's protection. Secular priests ascribed to the Institute belonged to this Sodality, which flourished for many years, and produced abundant fruit both in the diocese and beyond it.

Many other works of charity in various countries were about this time pressed on Father Rosmini for his acceptance; but not seeing the will of God plainly manifested in these cases, he was obliged to decline them.

CHAPTER XVIII

PROGRESS OF THE INSTITUTE IN PIEDMONT—FURTHER WRITINGS (1836–1838)

THE account of the Sisters of Providence, of the English Mission, and of the foundation of Tamié and San Michele, have somewhat interrupted the thread of our history; we will now return to consider what Rosmini accomplished in Piedmont from the time he left the Tyrol in 1836 to the year 1838, when the Institute was solemnly approved by the Holy See.

When once he had reached Calvario, the devoted charity of his sons amply repaid their Father for the sorrow and the wrongs he had endured at Trent and Rovereto. Indeed the impression this noble soul seemed to have retained of the painful treatment he had met with, was a heartfelt gratitude to our Lord, who directs to our good all those trying events that seem to us misfortunes. The following passage occurs in a letter written by Rosmini about this time to Father Robert Setti (Nov. 16, 1836): "I assure you that our Lord gives me grace to rejoice more over the disappointment at Trent than at the prosperity and approval with which the Institute is favoured here in Piedmont. The reason of this is that I consider the opposition of men more advantageous to my soul than their favour. What I desire solely and supremely is that God may have me in His love and forgive me my sins." After a few days' stay at Calvario he went to Stresa on the right bank of the Verbano, where he had in the previous year acquired a small house from Madame Anna Bolongaro, a rich and pious lady, who, left a widow in her youth, sanctified herself in that state by every kind of good work. Seeing that the

house would serve for a novitiate, he ordered it to be adapted for that purpose. In June he went to Turin to arrange for the foundation at San Michele, as we have related, and spent a month with the Jesuits, who at that time treated him very cordially. During his stay a continual stream of persons distinguished for virtue and learning went to visit him and seek his advice : amongst others, Professors Sciolla, Corte, Massara, Martini, Tarditi, and Boucheron, the Marquis Gustavo di Cavour, Silvio Pellico, and Counts Sclopis, Castagnetto, and Della Margarita. Visits such as these, marked by courtesy and wisdom, were welcome to him; but, like all great men, he was besieged by a crowd of so-called literary men and curious people, who wearied him with their idle chatter, compliments, and flattery. "All this praise wearies one," he wrote to his mother. "I am disgusted with it beyond measure. These people of Turin have given me such a surfeit of it that it makes me quite ill. It is no fault on their part, but is the outcome of their good-nature and politeness ; yet, to me, a simple rustic, it is unendurable ; *I am not used to it.*" In another place he tells her that he felt quite an idler, a sluggard, a lazy fellow whilst he was there ; on the contrary, the truth was that he found work in plenty, such as directing the students at Soperga, and drawing up a general course of studies for them, also a scheme for educating the deaf and dumb, directing a house of correction for priests, besides writing his *Comparative and Critical History of the various Systems concerning the Fundamental Principle of Ethics*,[1] which well deserves the title, for it explains and discusses more than fifty systems of celebrated authors, to elucidate and prove the supreme moral principle he has laid down in his own system. He has classified them as subjectivists and objectivists in a synoptical table which presents them to the reader at a glance.

On the 8th of August he returned to Calvario and went

[1] *Storia Comparativa e Critica de' Sistemi intorno al Principio della Morale*, published by Bertolotti, Intra, 1867.

on to Stresa, taking with him eight novices, four of whom were French and four Italians, and opened the novitiate in the house which had been prepared, greatly to the satisfaction of Cardinal Morozzo, who soon paid them a visit, and of Madame Bolongaro, who confidently expected great benefit to her dear Stresa. Rosmini gave the novices a three days' retreat on the Teachings of Death with great unction and fruit, as we are told by Father Signini, one of their number.[1] This was the first house of the Institute intended exclusively for a novitiate, and was placed under the patronage of St. Charles, to whom the Oratory attached to the house was already dedicated. In his new abode Father Rosmini once more applied himself to the *Philosophy of Politics*, and re-cast one part, which he published as *The Main Cause of the Rise and Fall of Human Societies*. In this work, and in *Society and its End*, he proves with all the vigour of a truly Christian philosopher the beneficent influence of Christianity. The most engrossing questions of the present day, such as liberty, independence, social equality and inequality, how to counteract the baneful influence of political parties, &c., are here discussed, made clear, and solved.

He also wrote a reply to Carlo Cattaneo, who had issued a bitter article against him in defence of Romagnosi. Only the first part of this reply appeared, on account of the opposition of the Censor; but the second part came later, in the *Annals of Science and Religion*, at Rome, when the polemical form had been changed.

About this time our Lord visited him with a severe trial in the death of Father Giulio Todeschi at Rome. On leaving Trent, Todeschi had preceded Rosmini to Calvario, where he communicated his own ardent zeal for perfection to the brethren; but Father Rosmini determined to send him on to Rome as a means of honourably and peaceably

[1] These meditations were published by Father-General Lanzoni with some additional meditations of his own, under the title of *Magisterio della Morte*, printed at Turin by Speirani, in 1882.

freeing him from the diocese of Trent, and also for the good of his health. Another reason for this step was that the solemn approval of the Institute was to be applied for, and he felt that to Todeschi this important matter might safely be entrusted. Yet God had other designs. At the beginning of September, not long after his arrival, Todeschi was attacked by a slight fever, which ere long became more serious, and he yielded up his pure soul to God on the 15th of September 1836, at the early age of thirty-three, assisted in his last moments by the Rev. Paolo Barola. We can well imagine the grief of Rosmini at the loss of one whom he loved as a Roveretan, a friend, a spiritual son, and a column of the Institute. He was heard to exclaim, "God removes from me all my helpers one by one, that I may learn to rely on Him alone." Few, even amongst the saints, have passed through such fierce trials and desolation as those related in the published life of the servant of God, Giulio Todeschi. He wrote nine philosophical dialogues on ascetic subjects for the use of students: they were printed at Casale in 1849.

Rosmini spent but a short time with his sons at Stresa, for, at the King's desire, he removed the novitiate house to San Michele, and was obliged to go to Turin to make the necessary arrangements. He stayed at the House of the Barnabites for two months with his secretary, Father Signini, and then, fearing to become a burden there, he rented some apartments for the three months he still remained in the city. He thus describes his daily life: "I am leading a retired life, something like a clock pendulum; one swing says 'study' and the other says 'church'; this is the kind of life that is beatitude to me." Many beautiful acts of virtue practised in this hidden life are related in Father Signini's interesting *Anecdotes*. As to studies, he completed the treatise *On Conscience*, revised the work on *Natural Right*, printed the Rules of the Institute, and wrote some philosophical letters to Poli, and one to Father Gentili on Cousin's Philosophy. On the 4th of April 1837 he

returned to Domodossola on business of the Institute, and to arrange for the removal of the novitiate of the Sisters of Providence from Locarno to Domodossola.

In May of the same year he was recalled on business to the Tyrol, where he had also to fulfil a duty towards his aged mother, who had just been stricken with apoplexy. Soon after his return to Calvario he was grieved by the news of the death, on July 17, 1837, of his old master, the Rev. Pietro Orsi, one to whom he considered himself deeply indebted, and whom he regretted as "the oldest and most faithful friend he had in the world."

In this same year, 1837, Count Mellerio wished to place under the care of the Institute, the academy he had founded in his native town of Domodossola; the Council of Reform consented, and also authorised the establishment of a boarding school for junior students, which was opened with some solemnity on the 6th of November. The first year there were only four boarders, but Father Rosmini, who always wished to see the works of charity thoroughly carried out as far as possible, however unimportant they might appear, provided for the four boys a little book of rules, which was subsequently printed. Such was the humble beginning of the Mellerio College, which increased so rapidly that in the course of a few years it had quite outgrown the building given by Count Mellerio, and was removed to a finer and more ample edifice. The remainder of the year 1837 and the year following passed without notable events. Father Rosmini's time was fully taken up with the ordinary government of the Institute and of the Sisters, the printing of the works which were being brought out by Pogliani, and a constant correspondence with Rome about the approval of the Institute; yet by diligence he contrived to prepare for the press two works, *Society and its End*, and the *Catechism according to the Order of Ideas*.[1] Rosmini's intention in writing the *Catechism* was to give his young

[1] *Catechismo secondo l'ordine delle Idee*, published by Nistri, Pisa, 1875. Translated into English, Burns & Oates, London, 1874.

religious and lay-brothers uniform instruction on Christian doctrine. This explains the plan of the work; the method followed in it is expressed in the title and a passage from St. Jerome placed at the beginning, "He (the Evangelist St. Matthew) began with the Humanity, that from the knowledge of man we might proceed to the knowledge of God." He preached the spiritual exercises to a number of his priests at Calvario—the first public retreat given to the members of the Institute—and these discourses were afterwards published under the title of *Conferences on Ecclesiastical Duties*.[1]

In this work an instruction on the necessity of self-examination before God is given by way of introduction. Then follow eighteen discourses on the nature and obligations of the Christian priesthood, which he classifies under three heads, viz., "sanctity, learning, and prudence," words which were inscribed on the sacred ephod of the Jewish high priest.

While Rosmini wrote and published many works for the restoration of science, as he had been urged to do by three Sovereign Pontiffs, he also exerted himself with wonderful success for the same end in another way, less striking in appearance. This was correspondence with his friends, whom he constantly urged to pursue their studies, always ready with his help to solve doubts and remove prejudices, and thus enable them to attain a full knowledge of the truth. Many of these letters, which give proof of the rich endowments of his mind and soul, were addressed to Bailo, a Vincentian Father, and Arrighi, professors of philosophy, Riccardi, Provost of Bergamo, Tonini, Sciolla, and the Marquis Cavour; but the most fervent entreaties to pursue the study of philosophy were addressed by him to the Jesuit Fathers, from whom he expected the most valuable assistance in the restoration of the sciences. In these letters he declares that the end of all his works was to make

[1] *Conferenze sui doveri degli ecclesiastici*, published at Turin by Speirani in 1880, and reprinted in 1882.

known our Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation wrought by Him. Speaking in particular of his philosophical system, he says, "Time will tell whether or not I am deceived in believing that by directing my studies to this end I am doing the will of God." To Gottardi, his former coadjutor at St. Mark's, he writes encouraging him to study especially the works of St. Thomas, and says, "I am more and more convinced that one of the greatest disadvantages to the clergy in our days, is that they have set aside the fountain-heads of Christian doctrine to quench their thirst at the rivulets." To Father Suryn, S.J., he writes, "I believe that a sound system of philosophy will be of the greatest advantage to the cause of God in these days, and that those who devote themselves to rendering it clear and convincing will acquire great merit for eternity. I should like to see the Jesuits engaged in this work; then I should expect great good indeed. If those who love God and understand His ways do not act, who can we expect to do so? Some people think this a roundabout way of trying to benefit mankind; but the human race has wanderings. I wish I could induce the Jesuits to feel as I do on the subject; I am sure St. Ignatius, if he were now on earth, would understand me." Those good Fathers, however, do not appear to have been very keen in the matter of philosophy. Still, there were others, distinguished men among clergy and laity, both in Italy and other countries, who, having tested his philosophical tenets, communicated with him on the subject, and became his champions and defenders, with the zeal that springs from conviction. His theories were adopted in the University of Turin under the auspices of the Council of Reform; they were favourably received and taught by Professors Sciolla, Corte, Martini, Massara, and Tarditi. Bailo taught them at Piacenza, Arrighi at Verona, Tonini at Bologna, Massaroli at Faenza, Barola at Rome. Gustavo di Cavour spread them in France by his newspaper articles; Canon Challamel translated some of Rosmini's works into French; whilst Cousin, Lacordaire, and Mon-

talembert expressed very favourable opinions. However consoling and encouraging these appreciations were, the chief consolation and encouragement to Rosmini was the welcome news that the Sovereign Pontiff had expressed his pleasure on receiving his newly-published works, and said that he still regarded the author with the same affection, and was glad to find that he was writing and doing so much in the cause of religion.

It is not to be supposed that his doctrines were received without opposition; a system which struck at the root of the sensism and subjectivism then prevailing in the schools could not fail to rouse opposition. The chief opponents were Galluppi, Mamiani, Testa, Abbà, and Costa; but they were all in good faith, and most of them changed their opinions, and some even adopted the new system when they understood it better.

In conclusion, I should like to quote a passage from one of Rosmini's letters describing his scientific adversaries of that time, which may aptly portray some of his later opponents as well: I say, *some*, because if his first opponents were ignorant of the true nature of his doctrines because they judged him hastily without due examination, his later critics were but too often blinded by prejudice, which clouds the mind and makes the judgment still more fallacious. "I notice," he writes to Cantù, "that people usually do not take sufficient pains to understand an author; the consequence is that they either misrepresent him or fail to grasp his theory at all. In the latter case they pick up a few of his phrases and contrive to piece them together, like the skin of a wild beast hung up as a trophy or a scarecrow, and say, 'This is So-and-So's philosophy.' What is to be done? We can only leave time with its great flail to separate the grain from the straw. I certainly do not ask people to adopt my opinions, but I should like them to be properly understood. I am every day more convinced that men, generally speaking, do not even perceive how much thought is required to understand the nature

of the question under discussion. Nevertheless, my dear Cantù, I assure you I have a clear intuition and a profound conviction of what I write; I am convinced that it is true, and that a hidden guide is directing us in all these things, God Himself. But He knows the times and the moments, and I have great confidence that He will bring forth salutary fruit for mankind from these seeds which are sown, I trust, by His inspiration, and simply out of obedience to His will."

CHAPTER XIX

APPROVAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF CHARITY—FATHER ROSMINI'S PROFESSION AT CALVARIO AND AT ROME (1837–1839)

It was almost ten years since the Institute, like a tender plant, had first taken root at Calvario ; its growth, however, was vigorous and promising, but it still lacked the solemn approval of the Vicar of Christ, a support which is almost a necessity to an Institute of the kind. As early as 1826, Rosmini, when explaining the plan of the Society to Cardinal Cappellari, had said, "I foresee that the affair will be more yours than mine," for he had then received consoling promises from his good friend. The Cardinal was now Pope, and Rosmini waited in silence for the approval which he confidently expected from Gregory XVI. Nor was he disappointed. Gregory was not one who would forget his promises amidst the splendour of a Court ; he gave repeated assurances of his kindly interest in the new Institute, enriched it with spiritual favours, honoured it with a Brief in which he names it the Institute of Charity ; and desired Cardinal Castracane, on his return from a diplomatic mission in Savoy, to pay a visit to the cradle of the Institute at Calvario. At last, in 1835, when Father Gentili went to obtain the Holy Father's blessing before his departure for England, he told him it was now time to send the *Constitutions* to Rome for examination, and bade Cardinal Castracane write to Father Rosmini to that effect. This message of the Sovereign Pontiff was to the Founder an invitation of Providence ; he hastened to draw up a compendium of the *Constitutions*, and in the meantime, during the month of June 1836, he sent to Rome Father

Todeschi, whose prudence and good judgment qualified him to undertake this important business. But, as we have elsewhere related, he was, after a short illness, carried to his grave before the *Constitutions* reached Rome. The document arrived in March 1837, accompanied by nine decrees of approval from cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, as well as by a petition to the Holy Father, asking for the privileges of Regulars for the Institute, so that, being dependent on the Holy See alone, it might flourish for the good of the universal Church. Foreseeing that Satan would arouse opposition, Rosmini recommended the matter to God, desired his sons to do the same, and then peacefully looked for success from God alone.

The Holy Father graciously received the petition, had the *Constitutions* submitted to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars for immediate examination, and appointed Cardinal Castracane promoter of the cause. The first Consultor deputed to examine them was Father Luigi da Lucca, one of the Friars Minor Observantines : he declared them to be " entirely in keeping with their title of Charity, a charity truly evangelical, wholly conducive to private and public good, spiritually and temporally, and in harmony with the sacred canons and the apostolic constitutions." His vote recommended their approval without hesitation. On the other hand, the Cardinals assembled on 16th June, though acknowledging the nature of the Institute to be holy, and declaring the Founder worthy of the highest praise, and those who embrace the Rule deserving of all encouragement, gave notice by a decree that the Approbation was to be deferred, as it was not clear whether Rosmini wished his Institute to be approved as a Congregation or as a Religious Order. This decree filled his friends with dismay : they felt that there was an enemy at work ; but he was neither disturbed nor astonished, thanked our Lord with a *Te Deum*, and began to pray that he might be better understood. " It is only with the help of my brethren's prayers," he said, " that I hope to meet all objections ;

when the right moment comes 'the mountains and the hills shall be brought low'; my entire confidence is in God alone."

In the meantime Father Robert Setti, one of those banished from Trent, arrived at Calvario, and was sent for his health to the milder climate of Rome, where it was hoped he might also be of service in the cause then pending. He was only twenty-seven years of age, but his gifts of mind, together with his affability, eloquence, easy and gentle bearing, and above all, his solid piety and heartfelt devotion to the Institute, made him most reliable. The report of the Congregation had already been issued when Father Setti reached Rome, and for a time he could only ascertain the particulars of what had taken place, and furnish the Consultors with any explanations they required. No sooner had Rosmini been informed by Cardinal Castracane of the objections raised by the Cardinals to the *Constitutions*, than he began to explain his ideas in writing, especially as to the nature of the poverty required in the Institute, about which the chief difficulties had been raised. He thoroughly explained his plan, proving that the bare possession of property, held merely by obedience, is not contrary to the essence of the religious state; and that the form of poverty professed in the Institute is the one most consistent with its nature, and demanded by Christian prudence at the present day. Cardinal Castracane declared himself completely satisfied; still, as it was necessary to hear another Consultor before the subject could again be submitted to the Congregation, he consented that Father Zecchinelli, a Jesuit, should be selected.

It must be remarked here that, from the first introduction of the cause, some members of a certain influential Order in Rome had shown marks of disfavour; they managed to get secret information of the business to be discussed, even before the Cardinals had assembled, and then instilled doubts into the minds of their Eminences which predisposed them to adjourn the case. When these doings

were made known to Rosmini, he sorrowfully, yet calmly, exclaimed, "How little did I expect to find enmity where I had looked for brotherly love!" When later on he read the report written by Father Zecchinelli, he saw that it was captious, and that jealousy had crept in, for the few honeyed words could not hide the animosity of the writer. Rosmini replied, exposing the subtleties and cavilling employed by the Consultor; but, to avoid irritating his adversaries, he allowed Father Setti to put forward the refutation. After presenting it, Father Setti asked the Cardinal Promoter to allow another theologian to be summoned to give an opinion on all the written votes, for and against. Father Turco, a Franciscan Conventual, was chosen, and when he had weighed all the objections raised against the *Constitutions*, and also against the *Rule*, which, as more brief, Rosmini had presented in the second instance, the Franciscan Father came to the conclusion that the *Constitutions* were "most holy and worthy of approbation," and that in the Rule there was "nothing which was not in strict accordance with the spirit of the Gospel and with Catholic doctrine."

Thus, in the course of the debate, ideas were cleared, difficulties removed, and minds were disposed to admit the bold innovation in the discipline of religious life, which was introduced by the new form of poverty professed in the Institute. The Cardinals perceived as they went on that the cause was one of singular importance; the Cardinal Promoter particularly was struck with the greatness of the mission assigned to the Institute by Divine Providence. Still Rosmini continued to put his trust in God rather than in men. "I have placed the Institute in the sacred side of Jesus Christ," he wrote to Cardinal Castracane; "He knows what is necessary for His Church." That his hopes might not be presumptuous he would strengthen them by prayer. From the very outset he warmly urged his children to pray, and in February 1838, when the decision of the Congregation seemed imminent, he wrote a circular letter

to the Superiors of the Institute, entreating all to increase the number and fervour of their prayers, and to supplement them by penance and almsgiving. He prescribed that the Superior-General should offer the Holy Sacrifice every day, and the other Superiors every Sunday, for the happy termination of the business; the Blessed Sacrament was to be exposed for three days in all the churches of the Institute, and at Calvario the Forty Hours' adoration was to be solemnised; a fast was prescribed for the Wednesday of every week, and where it could be done twelve poor persons were to be served at table by the Superior on the same day, to obtain from God that all the opposition and deceit of the enemy might be frustrated, and His own glory and that of Christ prove victorious.

The cause was far from its termination, however, for when the Congregation was about to meet, another hitch occurred and there was a fresh delay. Meanwhile, there was much talk in Rome; the air was full of strange and contradictory assertions. One said the Rule of the Institute required too high and difficult a perfection; another thought it was too philosophical, and wanting in ascetic simplicity; some detected a flavour of Quietism, others of Rationalism or semi-Pelagianism. Some taxed the Founder with excessive prudence because he aimed at securing property from the possible greed of Governments, while others accused him of lack of prudence because there was the possibility of losing it, if a Judas should be found in the Order. One criticised the style of the Latin as barbarous, and another regarded it as too sublime, because the *pittantia de carnibus* and the *scutella leguminum* of the Benedictine Rule were not to be found in it. The chief point of attack, however, was the kind of poverty set down; as though an innovation with regard to *form* would not redound to the honour of him who holds on earth the place of Christ, who made all things new. These criticisms, and still more the delay, seemed no good omen to Rosmini, who, suspecting some evil design, wrote to

Cardinal Polidori, "The devil will not fail to do his utmost to ruin the cause, so I shall not be surprised to find in the approaching debate the enemy prepared to sow cockle; but I know, on the other hand, and I believe firmly, that the evil spirit can effect no more than he is permitted to do by our Lord Jesus Christ, who conquered and bound him and keeps the chain in His own hands. If He sometimes allows Satan a certain latitude, He does so undoubtedly in order that His servants may resist and conquer him by the assistance of Divine grace, and thus obtain the merit and the reward." His anticipations proved correct.

After Father Turco's vote, dated the 6th of March, they went on skirmishing till the end of June, when with the utmost secrecy (even the Cardinal Promoter having no suspicion of the fact) Father Secchi-Murro, a Servite, was commissioned to write another vote. He wrote one, weak in its reasoning, but abounding in invective; his recommendation was that the Rule should not be approved, at least without some modification. What was Cardinal Castracane's surprise when this new report was brought to him a few days before the next meeting of the Congregation, which was fixed for the 3rd of August! Evidently things had been so arranged that Rosmini might have no time to clear himself of the charges—by no means light ones—brought against him by the new Consultor. The Cardinal spoke to Father Setti, and they decided to beg the Holy Father to postpone the meeting. So far the Pope had not interfered, in order to allow the judges full liberty; but now, seeing the plot laid to injure Rosmini and the Institute, he was most indignant, and sent for the secretary of the Congregation, whom he ordered to put off the meeting. In a subsequent friendly interview with Father Setti he declared his intimate conviction that the *origin of the Institute was from God*, assured him that the cause should be conducted in the usual way, but that "*his eye and hand would watch and protect it from unjust and perverse attacks.*"

This sudden resolution on the part of the Holy Father

spread consternation in the opposing camp; no one likes to bear the blame of shameful deeds—each tried to throw the responsibility on some one else. Rosmini, who was calmly awaiting the final decision, exclaimed on hearing of the fresh obstacles, "Glory be to Jesus and to His Cross!" and at once wrote a refutation of the vote given by the Servite Father as soon as he had read it; this he forwarded through Father Setti to Cardinal Castracane. Another opinion was now required, and the two new Consultors were Mgr. Bellenghi, Archbishop of Nicosia, and Father Paul of St. Joseph, a Carmelite; both pronounced the Institute worthy of approval, with the privileges of Regulars. Four months elapsed before the Congregation could again assemble, during which time "the devil played the fool as usual," wrote Father Paul to Rosmini. The Pope, however, watched over the interests of the persecuted. "Rosmini," said the Holy Father one day to Setti, "is a metaphysician in human affairs and in divine things, and it is not every one who has the head to understand him." He added a message bidding him have no fear. On high there was also One watching—the eye of Him who counts the prayers, the sighs, and the tears of His servants, and consoles them in due time. The day fixed for the meeting was the 20th of December, a good omen for Father Rosmini, because Rome was keeping the Feast of St. Julius, and Novara the feast of St. Felix, thus recalling the memory of Fathers Giulio Todeschi and Felix Moschini, the first two flowers of the Institute transplanted by the hand of God to their heavenly home. Eight Cardinals were present, Castracane, Sala, Giustiniani, Tiberi, Spinola, Patrizi, Mai, and Orioli. It was a stormy session; but when the tempest was calmed by Castracane and Orioli, the Congregation declared the Institute and its Rule worthy to be approved as a religious Congregation with the privileges of Regulars, especially with exemption in all that concerns internal discipline and the government of the Institute. Cardinal Castracane, who had devoted himself

so heartily to the cause, wept with joy at this happy termination. Nor was the Holy Father himself less pleased ; he confirmed the decree of the Congregation that very day, and gave the *Rule* canonical *status*. When Castracane went, according to custom, to present his Christmas good wishes two days later, the Pope embraced him affectionately, and kissed him on the forehead with a silence more eloquent than words.

The good news reached Rosmini on Christmas Day itself ; it was the most precious Christmas gift the Holy Child could have bestowed, and he exclaimed with a heart full of gratitude, " The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour hath appeared ! " And as in noble natures a benefit received gives birth at once to joy and its twin sister gratitude, he ordered his children for three years the same exercises of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving which had been prescribed for the success of the cause, so that the thanksgiving for the benefit received might equal, and even exceed, the petitions offered to obtain it. These were, perhaps, the days of most unmixed joy the Founder had known for many a year ; they were granted him by God in reward for past suffering, and, it may be, as Providence often arranges, to strengthen him for the new trials awaiting him in the near future.

Rosmini now fixed the 25th of March in the coming year as the day on which he and his sons would, by the holy vows, ratify the consecration of themselves to God which they had already made in their hearts. It was a day dear to him because it was the Feast of Our Lady's Annunciation, and the anniversary of his own spiritual birth in holy Baptism. Twenty members in Italy and six in England were privileged to make this first profession of the vows, and they prepared themselves by some weeks of retreat and a fast on bread and water on the vigil of the feast. In Italy, Calvario was chosen for the quiet ceremony, that spot where eleven years previously the *Constitutions* had been written and the Society inaugurated. Father Rosmini,

kneeling before the altar, was the first to pronounce the vows of spiritual coadjutor, which were received by Father Molinari, who, as the senior amongst them, had been unanimously chosen by the others to do so. This was the opening of the function; then in a short and impressive discourse he reminded his companions of their obligations towards God, who, gathering them together from various countries to make them one body in Christ, had called them to justice, and to charity which is its completion, and by charity to sacrifice which is the proof of charity, and through sacrifice to glory everlasting. Rosmini concluded by pointing out that the Man-God immolated on Calvary is the perfect exemplar of a religious of the Institute of Charity; nay, the first member, the founder of the Institute itself. He then celebrated Holy Mass, during which the psalm *Beati immaculati* was chanted. After the Priest's communion he received the profession of the vows from each, administering the Sacred Body of Christ as the seal of their act. There were five ascribed members present, Counts Mellerio and Padulli amongst the number; they also communicated and received their papers of ascription. The church was then opened to the public, who came with great joy to unite in singing the *Te Deum*, and to join in the festivity of the good religious whom they had long revered as Fathers. The same ceremony was taking place in England at the same time. Fathers Pagani and Gentili received each other's vows in the chapel of the Augustinian convent at Spettisbury.; the other four Fathers made them in the hands of Mgr. Baines at Prior Park. We must not omit to mention that the same evening Father Charles Narchialli, a truly angelic soul, who had been allowed to make his vows earlier when in danger of death, quitted this world, and may be said to have carried these first offerings of the Society before the throne of God. Before the sun had set on that memorable day, Father Rosmini wrote to acquaint the Holy Father with the joyful event that had taken place, and to assure him once more of his gratitude, and of the

unfailing devotedness to the Holy See of the Institute, which had come into existence under his own hands.

The joy of the Christian soul here below is never complete, and rarely without its admixture of bitterness; it may be that God wills it so lest he should be elated, or forget amidst the passing gladness of his exile the imperishable joys of eternity. The Founder of the Institute of Charity would certainly have felt more complete satisfaction if, amongst the brethren who that morning consecrated themselves irrevocably to God's service, he had seen the first companion with whom, eleven years previously, he had planted the little Society on Calvario. Lowenbruck, who had gone to France from Tamié, replied evasively to the words of affectionate sorrow with which Rosmini invited him to Calvario; he said he could not bind himself perpetually to the Institute without making his novitiate over again, and that his presence at Calvario would only damp their joy. The good Father once more besought him with heartfelt sorrow to come and pour out his troubles to his true friend, but he never came. He left the Society without anger or complaint, and devoted himself to missionary work, which was his first attraction. Years after, in 1848, not being quite at ease about the matter, he wrote to Father Rosmini, calling himself "the most unworthy and ungrateful of his sons," and begging for an interview, because he felt the need of an "ample forgiveness." He went to Rome, where Father Rosmini then was, and ever after retained the profound impression made on him by the words of fatherly severity which he addressed to him. He always remembered the Father as a saint, sent him money to defray the expenses he had caused, and offered him a house near Angers. He survived his friend thirty years, and died suddenly whilst he was giving a mission, like an old veteran who falls fighting on the battlefield. Though he was an ardent lover of good, great in virtue, and at times generous even to heroism, yet, on account of the volatile imagination which marred his many

gifts, he never acquired the spirit of the Institute. God sent him as a stimulus to spur on Father Rosmini, when founding the Institute. He was left to him as a help for some years, and for the frequent trial of his Superior's patient charity; but when apparently they might have rejoiced together over the fulfilment of their hopes, Providence removed him altogether. How unsearchable are God's ways!

After the profession on the 25th of March, 1839, Rosmini returned to Stresa, to hasten on the building of the novitiate, which he had much at heart, and on the 9th of May, the Feast of the Ascension, Cardinal Morozzo came to Stresa at Rosmini's invitation to lay the foundation-stone of the temporary church. The Cardinal addressed the assembled people, briefly touching on the many good works accomplished in the course of a few years by Rosmini and his Society, especially in the diocese of Novara. He blessed Divine Providence that his diocese was destined to be the first to receive these privileged souls whom he called the "angels of peace," and concluded by invoking upon them the blessing of God and wishing prosperity to the new Congregation.

The coadjutors' vows having been taken, the next step was to be the profession of the fourth vow, or presbyter's vow, by which certain members of the Society profess a special devotedness to the Vicar of Christ. It was fitting, on the first occasion at least, that this vow should be made at Rome. Count Mellerio having to go to Rome, Rosmini took the opportunity of sending, as usual, to the Supreme Pontiff a present of books, at the same time expressing his desire of going to Rome to make the fourth vow. The Pope graciously accepted the gift, praised the Institute and its Founder, and added assurances of its future success. He not only manifested his willingness that Rosmini should come to Rome, but gently complained that he had been so long absent. Mellerio sent the good news to his friend without delay, remarking that several of the Cardinals

seemed very favourably disposed; but Father Rosmini made little account of such appearances. "Words cost men so very little!" he wrote to Mellerio. "Sincerity is so rare! For some time past I have ceased to believe in compliments; I confine myself to facts, and place all my faith in the Word of God, which is ever true. I shall probably decide on going to Rome, but expect to feel like a man walking on thin ice or burning cinders." We shall soon see how prophetic were these fears. His chief anxiety was to expedite the *Apostolic Letters* approving the Institute, which he knew had already been drawn up by Mgr. Pacifici; he disliked delay, because it gives time to the evil one to interfere and mar the work.

While the affairs of the Institute were thus engaging his attention, he still found time to pursue his studies and correspond with his friends and other lovers of truth, and to publish new works. One of the most important of these is the *Manual for Directors of Retreats*,[1] which he dedicated to his "Venerable Fathers and Brothers in Christ, the Priests of the Catholic Church engaged in giving retreats to the faithful." The author humbly ascribes the substance of the work to St. Ignatius of Loyola, whom he styles its author, but the reader will soon perceive how much of his own Father Rosmini has inserted, to make it more ample and complete. It is divided into two books, in the first of which he instructs the director of the retreat on the method of giving the exercises; the second consists of three parts, which contain the meditations corresponding to what are called the Purgative, the Illuminative, and the Unitive way. A few meditations in Latin for a three days' retreat are appended. In the edition of 1872 an appendix was added containing in full the meditations on the eternal truths sketched in the first part of the book.[2]

[1] *Manuale* published in the *Ascetica* by Pogliani, Milan, 1840. Third edition: Bertolotti, Intra, 1872.

[2] These meditations were written by Father Puecher under Father Rosmini's supervision.

The *Parochial Sermons* and *Society and its End*, of which we have already spoken, were printed this year. The *Treatise on Conscience*[1] was also brought out. It sets down logically the rules according to which man is to judge the moral condition of his actions. Of the three parts, the first treats of the morality of human actions previous to the formation of conscience ; the second of their morality subsequent to the formation of conscience ; the third sets down the rules of conscience in two sections, viz., those which should guide the conscience already formed, and those which should guide the soul in the formation of conscience. No one who reads this book with an unbiassed mind can fail to admire the originality of the matter and the powerful reasoning, as well as the profound knowledge of human nature displayed by the author.

At the end of July 1840, Fathers Gentili, Pagani, and Belisy left England to join Fathers Rosmini, Puecher, Setti, Gilardi, and Toscani, at Stresa, and repair with them to Rome to make the fourth vow. On the eve of the Assumption, as they drew near to Rome, at the first sight of the cupola of St. Peter's, the Founder intoned the *Te Deum*, and at nightfall they entered the Eternal City. The next day he visited Cardinal Castracane, who obtained an audience from the Pope for the following day. Rosmini was the first to enter ; the Holy Father, on seeing him, said with evident pleasure, "By approving the Institute we have made a step in advance with regard to the ecclesiastical discipline of the Regulars." He then received graciously all his companions, including the lay-brother, G. Lugan, who accompanied them. The Father, on learning that the Pope would like the ceremony of taking the vow to be performed as quietly as possible, and outside the city, chose the Catacombs of St. Sebastian, a spot so dear to St. Jerome, St. Charles Borromeo, and St. Philip Neri,

[1] It was first published at Milan by Pogliani, but the best edition was produced in 1844 by the same publisher.

saints to whom he was devoted. Here it was that on the octave of the Assumption, after the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, our pilgrims consummated their holocaust of themselves to God. On the next day, six of them left Rome for Piedmont, and Father Rosmini remained with Father Setti to obtain some information about the Apostolic Letters approving the Institute, and to thank the Holy Father once more.

The Brief, signed on the 9th of August, had been taken out at the office of the Secretary of State at a reduced fee through the generosity of the Sovereign Pontiff. Now, however, on reading it over, Rosmini noticed that there were two obscure passages; and on the 26th he went to the Pope to have them cleared up. The first was soon explained; when they came to the second, concerning the dismissal of subjects from the Institute, the Pope asked to see the Brief, and after looking at it for a while, said that certain faculties were not to be inserted in it, but given separately. Rosmini was amazed, and respectfully suggested that there was no question of novelty in this case, several Pontiffs having granted Bulls to the same effect. Still the Pope seemed uneasy, and retained the Brief, saying he would peruse it and retouch it himself. It is easy to imagine Rosmini's sorrow at this unexpected decision. However, he said nothing, and in his Diary we find the following entry: "This affliction is certainly sent for my sins; no doubt there are many who, either through zeal or human weakness, have instilled these sentiments into the Pope's mind."

Father Rosmini had been dispensed from Court ceremonial when visiting the Holy Father, who had frequently told him to come in a friendly way at any hour and by the private staircase; but after the audience of the 26th he no longer presumed to do so. Urged by Cardinal Castracane, and to avoid appearing hurt at the occurrence, he went to the Palace with considerable reluctance on the 2nd of September. The Pope, assuming an air of reserve,

said, "We are friends as before, but now I must assume . . ." he left the sentence unfinished, but meant that he must now assume the dignity of the Sovereign Pontiff. He added that he would send for him; the Father, making a low obeisance, then retired with a fresh thorn in his heart. Certainly, if the Holy Father's mind were unchanged, his demeanour was altered; there is ample reason to believe that he hoped, in this way, to avoid arousing animosity or jealousy in old-established Orders by showing too marked a favour towards the new Institute. However that may be, Father Rosmini offered his sorrow to God and was silent; had he not alluded to it in the simple and modest words of his Diary, we should have known nothing of it. The humility, meekness, and patience of this great man are truly remarkable! God must have allowed the weight of the trial to come upon him so that his virtue might exhale a more exquisite fragrance under its pressure, as flowers when pressed emit a more abundant and sweeter perfume.

On the 12th of September, Pope Gregory sent for him, and spent a couple of hours reading and commenting on the Brief, which he had himself touched up before sending it on to the Segretaria. The Father made no comment, although some doubtful expressions did not escape his notice; then, after thanking His Holiness, he asked permission to leave Rome on the 23rd. The Pope consented, adding that he would have the Brief expedited without delay. On the 21st Father Rosmini went with Father Setti to kiss the Pope's feet for the last time; on the 24th of September he left Rome, and reached Stresa on the 30th.

To dissipate the somewhat sad impression this account may have left on the mind of my reader, I will touch briefly on the Apostolic Letters, *In sublimi militantis Ecclesiæ solio*, published by Pope Gregory XVI. on the 20th of September 1839, in which he approved the Institute of Charity. In that document, the Sovereign Pontiff, after

briefly describing the Religious Society founded by Rosmini, quoting the Rule comprised in seventy-three points, and stating that it had been diligently examined and proved to be in every way most fitted to promote the glory of God, the exaltation of Holy Church, the good of the Apostolic See and the benefit of the faithful, *approves, sanctions, and confirms in all its parts both the Institute and its Rule, adding thereto the inviolable seal of his own authority.* He continues : " And since We well know from experience that Our beloved son, the priest Antonio Rosmini, founder of this Institute, is a man endowed with singular and excellent intelligence, a soul adorned with eminent gifts, highly distinguished for his wisdom in things divine and human, conspicuous for his singular piety, religion, virtue, uprightness, prudence, and integrity, remarkable for his extraordinary love for and attachment to the Catholic religion and this holy Apostolic See ; and that in the foundation of the Institute his chief object was, that the Charity of Christ should be more abundantly diffused in the hearts of all and should draw all into unity, and that the Catholic Church might daily reap a more plentiful harvest, and the faithful be urged by a more powerful stimulus to the love of God and of one another ; for all these reasons, We have decided to appoint the same, Our beloved son, Superior of the Society for life, with all and each of the necessary and suitable faculties." It is a well-known fact that the above encomium was written with the Pope's own hand. Rosmini, considering himself unequal to the duties of so high an office, did his utmost to decline the dignity, suggesting others on whom it might be conferred instead ; but His Holiness was firm, and would have none other.

I am not aware that any Pope has written a eulogy of the kind just quoted of a person still living, and in a public document addressed to the whole of Christendom ; for my part, I have no doubt whatever that the coolness previously apparent in the Pope's manner—though evidently

not in his heart—was permitted by God with loving and wise counsel, so that the Holy Father's judgment, being above any suspicion of partiality, might appear all the more authentic and solemn. Are not the counsels of God with regard to those dear to Him always counsels of wisdom and of love ?

CHAPTER XX

PROGRESS OF THE INSTITUTE—SCIENTIFIC WORKS (1839–1843)

FROM Rome, Rosmini, having gained much experience, returned to Stresa, resolved to carry out two undertakings in that retired and peaceful spot. These were, to establish the Institute on a more solid basis and to carry on the *Encyclopedia* of philosophy—two works which were always uppermost in his thoughts.

In May 1839, as related in the previous chapter, Cardinal Morozzo, then over eighty years of age, visited Stresa and laid the foundation-stone of the church attached to the new novitiate. The latter was completed at the beginning of 1841; it was poor and simple, but gladdened by the beautiful sky and the lovely Lago Maggiore reflecting in its waters the enchantment of its pleasant shores, verdant isles, and the wide corona of hills and mountains by which it is encircled. We may here relate an incident which happened when the building was near completion. One evening, Rosmini called Brother Antonio Carli and sent him up from Stresa to see if there were anything amiss at the new building on the Ronco. He returned saying that all was safe, but the Father was not satisfied, and bade him go back to examine more carefully. The good brother did so with the same result, but was sent a third time; when on closer inspection he perceived smoke rising from a beam and discovered that it was smouldering. The fire was easily extinguished, before it had spread to any serious extent, and Rosmini thereupon gave thanks to God for having saved the house from destruction. Father De Vitt tells us the Father had dreamt the night before that the

new novitiate house was in flames; hence his apprehension. On the 24th of March, Father Puecher and his novices came from Calvario, and on the 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation, the novitiate was solemnly opened, to Father Rosmini's great joy. After having offered the Holy Sacrifice in the private chapel he addressed the Community, taking occasion from the opening of the new house to exhort them to be renewed in spirit, and to rekindle in their hearts the desire of becoming more and more united with our Lord: "for," he said, "the more we are united to Christ, the more this desire of union increases." In the evening the *Te Deum* was sung, and Father Puecher with the brothers in procession went round to bless the house, singing hymns, and invoking the protection of God and His holy angels on the new dwelling and its inmates.

Shortly afterwards this little family had the joy of receiving a precious treasure, the body of the youthful martyr, St. Crescentius, whose name was a happy augury for their increase in numbers and in sanctity. The body of this saint had been presented to Father Rosmini in 1841 by Monsignor Paolo Durio, Domestic Prelate of His Holiness, and had been deposited at the Visitation Convent at Arona until 30th April, when the Father went himself to bring the sacred deposit to Stresa. There it remained till the 29th of August 1887, when Father-General Lanzoni presented it to Father Joseph Costa for the American mission at Galesburg, Illinois.

Cardinal Morozzo who had laid the foundation-stone of the church, and longed to see it finished and the house inhabited before his death, was greatly pleased to hear that the novitiate was opened.

The growth of the Institute was not rapid or clamorous, but gradual and unobtrusive, as became its nature. Many exemplary priests entered about this time, amongst others Fathers Scesa, Ceroni, Imperatori, and Gagliardi from the diocese of Novara, but before these Father Francesco Paoli from Pergine in the Tyrol had been admitted. This

saintly priest, who had been secretary to Mgr. Sardagna, gave up that post in order to become one of the little ones of Christ; and from the first gave proofs of great talent and a generous spirit.[1] Beyond the novitiate, the Institute still carried on the works already begun: at San Michele the guardianship of the Abbey, the offices of the church, and assistance of various kinds afforded to parish priests in the dioceses of Turin and Susa; at Domodossola, the care of the Sacred Mount, and in the town itself the charge of the school, with the college added to it in 1839; each of the houses attended as far as possible to other additional calls of charity. Father Rosmini himself, with his many and varied occupations, did not refuse to give retreats to the clergy between 1840 and 1843 at Rovereto, Verona, Bergamo, and Brescia. In 1840 the elementary school at Stresa, in 1842 the schools of Intra, and in 1843 those of Domodossola, were entrusted to the Institute. Some works of greater importance were offered to Rosmini during this period. Prince d'Aremberg came to Calvario to confer with him about founding a medical college, and set apart half a million lire for that purpose; Cardinal Franzoni offered him the mission of Phillipopolis in Roumelia; Dr. Polding, Bishop of Sydney, asked him to send priests to Australia, and Count Bielinscki made the same request for Poland; Parma and Pisa requested him to send professors of philosophy, and many schools and colleges were offered him. God did not allow these proposals to be carried into effect, however; perhaps they were too great, and out of keeping with the humble beginnings of the Institute, and the repeated injunctions of Pope Pius VIII. "to begin in a small way." Perhaps they would not have been advantageous to the Institute itself, for it often happens with Orders as with individuals, that too rapid a growth results in premature decay.

After its approval the Institute met with greater favour

[1] Father Paoli survived Rosmini many years, and wrote a Life of his Father and Master which was published at Turin in 1880.

in England. Father Pagani was once more back at Prior Park with his companions, except Father Gentili, who remained in Italy until May 1839. Mr. Phillips de Lisle, however, who knew what a treasure he was, united with Dr. Walsh, Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District, in urging Father Rosmini to send him to England for the mission of Gracedieu. He acceded to their request with these words of prophetic augury: "May he be to England another Augustine!" In May 1840 Father Gentili arrived at Gracedieu, and there, labouring with all the ardour of an apostle, he soon had the consolation of seeing the wild, uncultivated land produce fruit far beyond his hopes, more than two hundred souls being brought back to the Church of Christ in the course of two years. In May 1841 Father Pagani took charge of the mission of Loughborough, with Fathers Signini and Ceroni to assist him; in November 1842 the Institute left Prior Park, and Fathers Pagani, Signini, and Belisy went, at the pressing invitation of Dr. Walsh and Dr. Wiseman, to teach science and languages at Oscott College. The mission at Loughborough, being more important than the one at Gracedieu, was then, with Mr. Phillips de Lisle's consent, entrusted to Father Gentili, and Fathers Rinolfi and Ceroni were appointed to assist him. Here his ardent zeal had full scope; he introduced the practice of preaching missions to the people in the public church, and at the first mission which he gave with Father Furlong in 1843, they had the consolation of receiving sixty-three Protestants into the Church. In eighteen months he received no less than two hundred and eighty-three adult Protestants into the Church, amongst whom we must not omit to mention young William Lockhart, the disciple and friend of Newman and Manning, who were still Anglicans, but ere long were to follow his example. Whilst yet a Protestant, Lockhart had read the *Maxims of Christian Perfection*, and when, in 1842, he met Father Gentili at Oxford, he seemed to see in him the perfect Christian described in that little work; in fact he looked on him as a

saint. In the August of the following year Lockhart went to see him at Loughborough to confer with him upon the state of his soul, and after a few days' retreat was received into the Church, and then entered the Institute of Charity.

Besides the preaching of missions, Father Gentili introduced into England the devotion of the Month of Mary, the Forty Hours' Exposition during the Missions, the renewal of the Baptismal Vows at their close, the celebration of the Funeral Obsequies and Burial of the Dead according to the Roman rite, and the practice of appearing publicly in ecclesiastical attire.

The rapid progress of the Institute in England made it imperative to provide a novitiate house, where new labourers could be prepared to reap the abundant harvest. Father Rosmini had already thought of this ; and, thanks to the generosity of Count Mellerio, Madame Bolongaro, and other good people, he secured a site for the purpose at Ratcliffe, about seven miles from Loughborough. In March 1843 the foundation-stone was laid of an edifice designed by Pugin, the restorer of Gothic architecture in this country.

Whilst the Institute was taking deep root and spreading both in Italy and in England, the Ascribed members also became very numerous. In order to assign to this branch of the Order its own definite sphere of usefulness, Rosmini wrote special *Constitutions* in which he drew out the plan of the association, pointed out the differences between it and other similar associations, and showed how it might be practically useful. There were many persons in Italy and elsewhere anxious to be connected by a tie of this kind with the Institute ; some of the most distinguished were Mgr. Samuelli, Bishop of Montepulciano, and Dr. Wiseman, Bishop of Mellipotamus—whom Father Rosmini constituted Presidents of the Ascribed members in Tuscany and in the Midland District of England respectively—and also Mgr. Emmanuele Sardagna, Bishop of Cremona.

Another branch of the Institute, the Adopted children,

attained a still more vigorous growth. Chief amongst them were the Sisters of Providence, who acquired a certain security and sanction through the approval of the Institute. Between 1839 and 1843 they founded houses at Arona, Trontano, Craveggia, and Vigevano, and at Biella-Piazzo. In October 1843 Father Rosmini, at the request of Lady Mary Arundell, sent Sisters Francesca Parea and Anastasia Samonini to make a foundation in England; and when sending these good Sisters, he impressed upon them that their apostleship should be one of active and beneficent love, that they were to render virtue amiable by their actions, and, in a word, to teach more by their lives than by precept. Writing to them he says, "Remember that you will only be able to make known what the Catholic religion really is to those souls 'sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death' by the exercise of indefatigable and boundless charity." These words of his were not without effect upon these obedient daughters, as their lives testify. From the day they had been confided to him by our Lord, he looked upon them as true spiritual children, so that his affection and consequent solicitude were now divided between the two Institutes of Providence and Charity. As soon as the approval of the Institute of Charity was granted, he hastened to comply with their pious desires by allowing the Sisters to consecrate themselves to God, first by the temporary and then by the perpetual vows. For the direction of the novitiate, he wrote Rules for the guidance of the Mistress of Novices; he arranged that the Sisters intended for the schools should be well instructed, especially in method, and he also drew up Rules for the Director of the Sisters, who has so large a share in their government. Nor was he satisfied with general directions, as we see from the numerous letters written to the various houses on special occasions, and likewise to individual Sisters to direct them in their doubts, to strengthen them in uncertainty, to enlighten their conscience by the clearness of his own, to infuse into them something of the vigour of his

own will, to make them, in fact, women of manly judgment, prudence, and courage, which is the chief characteristic of these daughters of Antonio Rosmini.

The gradual extension of the Institute, with its Adopted children and Ascribed members, could not fail to delight the heart of him who founded it; yet he cared less for its rapid growth than for perfecting each of its parts and rendering their union more compact; in fine, he wished to impart to his work that finish which beautifies while it ensures stability. This was the scope of many decrees regarding discipline, education, and economy issued during these years, intended to give effect to the *Constitutions* and to explain them. His first decrees had in view the regulation of community life; the second provided for the improvement of methods and the rearrangement of all the studies, from the most elementary to classics and theology, while the economic decrees tended to preserve intact the form of poverty proper to the Institute. All these decrees are marked by wonderful versatility of mind, which shows that Father Rosmini could descend from the loftiest speculation to what is humblest and commonest in daily life; still more admirable is the skill with which he infuses a certain spiritual savour into the most material things, almost changing their nature, and making them conducive to piety and fervour of spirit. This is particularly noticeable in the decrees concerning studies, examinations, and holidays, which, while they tend to promote the multiplied and various forms of mental culture, seem chiefly directed to guard against allowing study to destroy the affections of the heart, dry up the sources of piety, or relax regular discipline. For the benefit of the priests engaged in the sacred ministry, especially in the tribunal of penance and preaching the Word of God, he ordered that conferences should be held to discuss cases of conscience and to promote among his priests that uniformity of doctrine which comes from holding the same principles, and prepares them to exercise charity with greater fruit. He provided

in a similar way for the ministry of preaching, so that it might not only be performed to the spiritual advantage of the preacher, but in words full of life and energy, announcing with fidelity in a becoming and fervent manner the revealed Word of God. To encourage devotion to our Blessed Lady, that great incentive to piety, he petitioned the Holy Father, in December 1843, to allow the members of the Order to add the invocation *Regina sine labe concepta* to the Litany of Loreto, and to insert in the Preface of the Mass, *Et te in conceptione immaculata.* These matters are small, but we allude to them in passing, in order to refute the false assertions made against him on this point.

Thus far of the progress and government of the Institute ; a word now on the scientific labours of Rosmini. Accustomed to follow the leadings of Providence manifested to him by exterior events, Rosmini devoted himself to pedagogy and method during these years, so that the schools offered to him might be well regulated : hence his correspondence by letter with Pallavicini, Rosi, Lambruschini, and Aporti, men noted for their success in pedagogical science. This was the object also of his *Supreme Principle of Method,* begun towards the end of 1839, but never completed, though the greater part of what we have was written in six months.[1] A work of greater importance, undertaken between 1840 and 1843, was the *Philosophy of Right,*[2] two large volumes replete with matter. The first part treats of the *Essence* or *Foundation of Rights ;* the second develops the principle from which all rights are derived, and shows this principle to be the right of property. Some other works on theological subjects will be spoken of in the next chapter. In another and humbler way, but not to less advantage, he continued to fulfil his mission as a writer ; I allude to his active correspondence by letters written to throw light on obscure questions and to resolve doubts

[1] This work has been translated into English by Mrs. William Grey, and was published at Boston, 1887, by D. Heath & Co.

[2] *Filosofia del Diritto,* published by Bertolotti, Intra, 1865.

and difficulties proposed to him by learned men in search of truth. Among these letters—proofs alike of the wisdom and of the kindly disposition of the writer—we may mention one written to Benedetto Monti on the *Essence of Knowledge*, another to Sola on the *Means of avoiding Pantheism*,[1] one to Barone on the *Forms of Being*, and to Manzoni on *Rationalism and its Influence on the French Revolution*, others to William Agar on *Intellectual Perception*, and to Monsignor Cullen, of the Irish College at Rome, on a *System of Sound Philosophy*, a long letter which he concludes with these words: "It belongs to the clergy to educate the world, and they cannot adequately fulfil this duty, either now or in the future, unless their knowledge is founded on a true philosophy."

In this way Rosminian doctrine continued to spread, and daily gained fresh followers and supporters. Vitali and Pestalozza taught it in the seminaries at Monza and Milan; Paganini in that of Lucca; Cardinal Belli in his seminary at Tesi; Casara, Founder of the Schools of Charity, taught it to the students of his Congregation at Venice; Father Daneri, a Vincentian, to his students at Sarzana; Villoresi to the Barnabites at Monza; Puiatti in the Lyceum of Concordia; Francesconi and Bonacci at the College of the Sapienza at Perugia under the auspices of Cardinal Mezzofanti. Beyond Italy, Cavour made it known in his *Fragments Philosophiques*, and Görres, through his daily paper, introduced it into Germany. It was not without opponents: I only say something here of Vincenzo Gioberti, who appeared to be his most formidable adversary in the field of philosophy, distinguished more for the brilliancy of his armour, however, than for the temper of his steel.

When this writer first brought out his *Theory of the Supernatural*, Father Rosmini, at the request of the Abate Gustavo Avogadro, sent him in writing his candid opinion—

[1] *Sulla maniera d'evitare il Panteismo*, published in the *Introduzione* by Pane, Casale, 1851.

a severe one, though couched in terms expressive of respect for the intellect and spirit of the writer. This letter to Avogadro was published in the *Cattolico* of Lugano without giving any offence to Gioberti; but later on, when it appeared amongst Rosmini's apologetic writings, and Tarditi presumed to find fault, though in a very courteous way, with some of Gioberti's theories, the latter fired up, and in a few hours issued a first volume on *The Philosophical Errors of Antonio Rosmini*. It was soon followed by two others full of bitter remarks, though these were probably more theoretical than spiteful. Rosmini let him have his say, though his silence was the effect neither of fear nor of contempt, but the outcome of prudent and Christian charity. He, who had, as a youth, fearlessly opposed men of great and established fame like Gioia, Foscolo, and Romagnosi, could entertain no dread of the declamation, challenges, or threats of the exile from Turin. He was silent because it would have been waste of time, of little or no advantage to science, a grief and perhaps a scandal to the good, and a source of joy to the wicked, had he condescended to dispute with a man who only wanted to fight, an inexhaustible writer, and so wild in his assertions as to declare that he understood Rosmini better than all the Rosminians, and even than Rosmini himself! Rosmini therefore remained silent, and left his defence to his friends, Tarditi, Pestalozza, Barone, Fantozzi, and Tommaseo. But when the first outburst had subsided, he gathered up the objections of his adversary, and condensed them into a few syllogisms, replying to each with acute reasoning, and then in some philosophical lectures examined Gioberti's system and exposed its latent pantheism.[1] A few years after, Gioberti met Rosmini, and was filled with reverence for him; and in words which do honour to the writer he confessed his regret for having attacked him so violently. "When once I had made Rosmini's acquaintance I could not but lament the bitterness of what I had written; and I, too, with Italy

[1] *Gioberti e il Panteismo*, Lucca, 1853.

itself, began to reverence such great wisdom united with so much virtue."

During these years, while Father Rosmini had the consolation of seeing his Institute increase and his teaching spread, the counterpoise of tribulation was not absent. In March 1841 the tribunal of Casale, contrary to all expectation, decided the lawsuit between Cardinal Morozzo and Canon Capis in favour of the latter, and thus placed in jeopardy the occupation of Calvario by the Institute, which had sprung up on that spot. Writing to Mellerio, Rosmini says, " The decision about Calvario has gone against us ; we have said the *Te Deum* from our hearts, but we do not on that account think of leaving the Holy Place where we have taken up our abode; nay, we hope more than ever, ' hoping against hope '! The unexpected sentence comes from God, and that is enough to sweeten it for me."

The closing months of this same year were most trying to him on account of the dangerous illnesses which attacked at the same time many of the Brothers and most of the Superiors of the Institute. Fathers Pagani and Signini in England were spitting blood ; in Italy, Father Setti, Rector of the College at Domodossola, was suffering from a disease of the chest; Father Puecher, Master of Novices, was threatened with consumption ; and Father Molinari, Rector of San Michele, had an attack of hæmorrhage while giving a mission. Father Rosmini notes these afflictions in his Diary, and adds, *Sit nomen Domini benedictum.* In 1841 death carried off the tutor of his early years, the Rev. F. Guareschi, for whom he entertained a great affection ; for this sorrow also he did not fail to bless God. In the January following, death separated from him the one most dear to him on earth, his mother. She departed this life on the 15th of January 1842, at the age of eighty-five, and her son had not the consolation of assisting her in her last moments, either to give her as a priest, or receive from her as a son, a last blessing. She received special suffrages from him and from the Institute as an Ascribed member. His re-

signation was expressed in the words of Job, which he uttered, his eyes raised to heaven : " The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." [1] And with other words, the echo of those used by a Saint on a similar occasion, he exclaimed, " Now the last link that bound me to my native place is broken ; now can I say with greater truth that my only home is heaven."

Another tribulation, by far the most grievous of all on account of its nature, duration, and the persons who instigated it, fell to his lot during this period. It must have a chapter to itself, and a chapter will not be too much to devote to it.

[1] Job i. 21.

CHAPTER XXI

A HEAVY TRIAL FOR ROSMINI—A DECREE OF POPE GREGORY REMOVES IT (1839–1843)

RARELY do good men escape the crown of persecution, and it is but too often woven for them by the hands of the good. Nor should we take scandal at this; we ought rather to admire the counsels of a loving Providence, which on the one hand designs to perfect the virtue of the sufferer and make it conspicuous in the eyes of his very persecutors; and on the other teaches the good to be more cautious in their judgments and in their actions, lest they should persecute the friends of God in their zeal for His cause. I will now briefly narrate the persecutions which Father Rosmini had to endure for some years, at the same time treating their authors with all possible consideration.

It would seem that the Apostolic Letters approving the Institute ought to have put an end to the opposition it had encountered while the *Constitutions* were under examination. The Jesuit Father Perrone expressed his good feeling in the *Annals of Religious Science,* where he spoke of Rosmini as a philosopher who was a great honour to religion and to Italy, and declared that the fundamental principles of his system were in conformity with the doctrines of St. Thomas, and that he had refuted with great success all kinds of sensists, sceptics, idealists, and transcendentalists. Father Mazio, another Jesuit, who reckoned him one of the soundest philosophers and ideologists, also called him "the brightest light of the Italian sky." He was comforted at finding that the religious who were said to be his opponents, were not really such. The first religious to attack him was a Polish Jesuit, Father

Dmowschi, who in 1840 found fault with his system of ideology and his definition of the moral law. His remarks were couched in courteous terms, and our Father replied with equal courtesy.

This was but a skirmish: the real battle began with the appearance of the treatise on *Conscience*. While he was dictating this work, he remarked to one of the Fathers, "It will draw down upon me great persecutions; but God wishes me to write it, and I desire nothing but to fulfil His will." A report then began to spread that he had abused Segneri and St. Alphonsus Liguori. He had, indeed, with the liberty of an author pointed out the erroneous nature of some of Segneri's arguments, but with regard to St. Alphonsus he had only sought to explain and reconcile some statements of his which seemed to contradict each other, and that certainly could not be considered derogatory to him. "As to St. Alphonsus," he wrote to Mazio, "you must know that I consider it a privilege to have him, not only as my patron, but also as my glorious master. Beyond the observations you mention, I have written nothing against the *moral theology* of that holy man, which I preach and recommend as the best to every one. Those observations do not, I think, in any way affect the practical consequences which are the result of his doctrines, and upon which his teaching itself must be judged in its essence and in its spirit; they refer only to some theoretical propositions from which the Saint himself departs when he comes to practice. He lays down principles, adding certain exceptions; I make use of these exceptions to modify the principles, that they may be employed in their full force, and that perfect coherence between the principles and their consequences may be secured. It seems to me that I have in this way carried out the Saint's intentions, and that he would say I had substantially expressed his thought, but in a more philosophical form; for St. Alphonsus made slight account of the form in which he clothed his teaching, and paid little

attention to the order. He went straight to the point; we, more humanly, perhaps, take a longer route, and God grant we may not loiter on the way."

The tide was rising, however, and these declarations could not stem it. In March 1841 rumours were afloat in Rome that some work of Rosmini's was under examination; the report was more definite at Genoa, so that Father Mazzi, who was staying there for the sake of his health, being alarmed at the list of censures on the treatise on *Conscience*, sent it to his Superior. The latter, having read it, concluded that it was issued in a moment of excitement, and quietly waited to ascertain where it came from. "I can tell you frankly," he wrote to Cardinal Castracane, "that my conscience does not reproach me in any way. A writer must not be afraid of adverse criticism; on the contrary, he must expect to be criticised by friends as well as by enemies. In these days we want men who will handle the cause of religion openly and sincerely without human prudence." Still more plainly he wrote to Barola: "Inveterate prejudices are not so easily dispelled by the light of truth, but I have great confidence that with time it will dispel them. My hopes are founded on the goodness of God, who loves mankind and desires men to advance steadily in the knowledge of truth and of Himself, the Eternal Truth, thereby procuring their own sanctification. I am persuaded—although God knows I sincerely recognise my great unworthiness of such a favour, and you will, in charity, not accuse me of presumption—I am persuaded that my doctrine is from God, that He alone communicates it to me; and, I may add, without much intervention of human means, through the light of His grace. This assurance does not make me think myself infallible—God forbid! I know only too well that I may perchance mingle something of my own leaven with what our Lord makes known to me, and no doubt I do so, more or less; but this can be sifted out by any one, and cast aside by those whom God enables to do it. All this between ourselves."

In April a work appeared simultaneously at Rome, Genoa, Lucca, and Turin, privately printed under the *nom-de-plume* of *Eusebio Cristiano*. It garbled the doctrine of the treatise on *Conscience*, called it *false*, *heretical*, *poisonous*, *deadly*, and even termed the author *blind*, *lying*, *bold*, &c. This libel, so obscure in its origin, was distributed with the utmost secrecy, especially in the episcopal Curias; not a copy was to be had from the booksellers for love or money. Canon Bertolozzi of Lucca, afterwards Bishop of Montalcino, astounded at the statements which were being circulated, that Rosmini had fallen into heresy, wrote to him about it as a sincere friend, begging him, if such were the case, to open his eyes. The reply was an admirable letter, from which I quote a few passages. "What is most important is my faith. I was not born to be a learned man or to win men's applause, nor have my poor labours ever been directed to that object; but I was born to be a believer, to be made worthy of the promises of Christ, as a devoted son of His Church. My treasure is in the holy faith, and there also is my heart. Therefore let us suppose it were to happen that the holy Apostolic See, my Teacher and the Teacher of the whole world, should find anything of mine worthy of censure, I should have no difficulty in making whatever kind of public declaration might be necessary to place the purity of my faith in the clearest light, because anything I might have said against that faith would certainly have been said contrary to my own convictions. Therefore, in retracting it, I should simply express the unchangeable thought which always reigned in my heart, and only correct the imperfect outward expression which had failed to convey my inmost thought, that is to say, the plenitude of my faith. What have I ever sought in my poor writings except to help souls? And could I now with my eyes open seek to pervert them? God will never allow it: I have perfect trust in Him, and in Him alone, that He will not; I confide in Him who infused the faith into me as a child, and gave me an

unbounded devotion to the decisions of the Holy Apostolic See, in Him who fills my heart with joy whenever I make an act of faith; and I could almost wish to have fallen into some involuntary error—provided no one was injured by it—that I might have the opportunity of making a more open and solemn confession of faith." This letter gave great edification to all who read it without malice; the Holy Father himself was completely satisfied on reading it.

About the beginning of May, Rosmini succeeded in getting a copy of the pamphlet; it was sent to him by Cardinal Tadini, a great friend, who promised to take up his defence, and added, "You must be prepared for war; you have powerful adversaries." After skimming the pamphlet he was reassured, for in the imputations there was not a particle of truth; but it was a source of keenest sorrow to him to know whence they came. "I have discovered a secret conspiracy," he wrote to Mellerio. "In several Italian towns there are people going round whispering to distinguished persons that I am a 'declared heretic,' a 'Jansenist,' and worse. I am horrified to think who the authors are of this plot. 'If my enemy had spoken against me, I would indeed have borne it; but thou, a man of one mind with me, my guide and my familiar!' Pray then to our Lord. The approach of the long-expected battle does not disturb me, but makes me hope in God the more." To Barola he writes, "This is a war waged not against me, but against the Institute of Charity, against this flock of the Lord, yet so little. 'Come, let us oppress him craftily,' is the cry of those who think themselves powerful and are not, safe and are not. This furious and cunning attack, far from terrifying me, does but make me rejoice at the expectation of its future effects. God allows the evil that He may draw out of it much good; I thank Him with gladness of heart." And again, "My works are not the cause of this struggle; they are only the pretext. The real cause of the conflict lies deeper. The Institute of Charity is better known to the devil than it is to men,

and he wants to take his measures in good time." Father Rosmini seized an occasion, placed in his way by Providence about this time, of proving his generous charity. He received the Jesuits who were driven into Italy from the Valais, entertained them for a month with the most cordial charity, and provided them with all necessaries. When it was represented to him that the Institute might suffer in consequence, he replied, "If the Institute were to be suppressed on account of its charity, it would have attained its end, which is to become a victim of charity."

We may ask, Who was this *Eusebio Cristiano?* "*Eusebio*," said Father Rosmini, "is not one person but a legion." He spoke truly, for many hands had taken part in the composition of that pamphlet, but no one was willing to pose as its author—all of them were ashamed of having produced such a monstrosity. Who the authors were, and how the publication was effected, was later on declared in detail by Passaglia and Melia, nor is it necessary to enter into the matter here. The first to take up Rosmini's defence were the theologian Gastaldi in the *Propagatore Religioso*, and Pestalozza in the *Amico Cattolico*, of Milan. Paganini, too, who, though still but young, was Professor of Philosophy in the seminary at Lucca, took up his pen against Eusebio; but, as his adversaries were powerful at the episcopal court, he had to desist. After consulting God in prayer, and taking the advice of prudent persons, Rosmini himself decided to write, and his *Answer to the so-called Eusebio Cristiano*[1] appeared in August. It was a fuller work than was strictly necessary, as he thought it a fitting opportunity for clearly stating the Catholic doctrine with regard to original sin, so that his work might not appear to be written solely for "contentious men who soon pass away from the scene of this world." Those who read it dispassionately considered it a triumphant reply, but to others the style seemed too stinging.

[1] *Risposta al finto Eusebio Cristiano*, published in the *Opuscoli Morali* by Pogliani, Milan, 1843.

On this being brought under the notice of the Holy Father, he answered, "I understand, but a man in Rosmini's shoes must needs have no blood in his veins to write as you wish." Certainly, to be accused of heresy is the deepest wound a priest can receive; still it was not through resentment, much less out of revenge, that Rosmini wrote so pointedly; he did so after mature reflection, considering this a case for *answering a fool according to his folly*, and putting him to shame, both for the preservation of Catholic doctrine in its integrity, and in order to defend from unmerited attacks the Institute committed to him by God.

His *Reply* to Eusebio irritated his adversaries, who retaliated with anonymous writings, against which he issued his *Nozioni di peccato e di colpa*.[1] The controversy raged on, and lasted the whole of the year 1842 and part of 1843. On Rosmini's side, besides Gastaldi and Pestalozza, were Bertolozzi, De Rosso, Fantozzi, and Pagani; against him was Dinelli, a priest from Lucca. While the opposing party were openly attacking him in writing, they were at the same time carrying on an underhand warfare, and attacking him in the dark, so that he could not defend himself. They continued to circulate the report that the treatise on *Conscience* was under examination; indeed, some gave out that it was already condemned, adding that Rome wished the notice to go round in a whisper from ear to ear, so as to avoid disturbance; the consequence was that the rumour quickly found its way from Italy into Germany, France, Belgium, and England. By these accusations of false doctrine, an attempt was made at Verona to prevent the opening of a house of the Institute which was in prospect; in fact, the Bishop had to apply to Rome to ascertain that all was right. Suspicions were malignantly raised against Rosmini personally, by stating that he was obstinate in his errors; and threats were used, as well as flattery and persuasion, to alienate his friends and defenders. The whisper of calumny found its way even into convents, and

[1] Published by Pogliani, Milan, 1843.

the confessor of the Sisters of Providence at Chieri, taking advantage of his position, tried to turn them against their Superior and Father. Still his opponents felt that all the fighting would have small success so long as Rosmini had the shield of Pope Gregory's protection; they made an attempt to deprive him of it, and means are never lacking for such evil designs. At the first appearance of the libel by *Eusebio*, the Holy Father was somewhat disturbed: his fears were removed by Rosmini's letter to Bertolozzi; then the numerous false reports repeated to him privately seemed at times to make him waver. Not that he for a moment doubted Rosmini's innocence or the soundness of his doctrine, but he feared that the Institute would come to grief on account of these disputes. At Rome he would allow no word to be printed for or against. "I do not want to have my own house set on fire," he said; still he would not extinguish the flame with his own hand, thinking it better to let it burn itself out. Castracane and Barola were witnesses to the Pope's constant esteem and affection for the Father, and they wrote to him from Rome to reassure him. Cardinal Tadini wrote from Genoa, "I know that His Holiness continues to love and esteem you, and that he has not allowed himself to be influenced by certain distinguished persons who tried to discredit your doctrine." However, some were not as cautious and as firm as Pope Gregory. Count Mellerio cooled, and put off indefinitely the erection of his new college at Domodossala. Charles Albert, who had been extremely favourable to the legalisation of the Apostolic Letters, now drew back under the influence of Count Solaro della Margarita. Mr. Phillips de Lisle had offered a piece of land for building the novitiate in England, and Mr. Sibthorp, a convert, promised £3000; but on hearing the sinister reports, both withdrew their offers. To all this must be added the dearth of vocations to the Institute, for the dark cloud of suspicion hung over it.

Amidst this raging storm Father Rosmini abandoned himself wholly into the hands of Him in whom there is

neither agitation nor disturbance, and enjoyed profound peace. "Do not distress yourself about the persecution raised against us," he wrote to Mazzi; "you may be sure it is intended by God for our good, particularly as a means of correcting our defects and uniting us more closely with Him. We must not be too soft, and expect always to sail with a fair wind; in fact, our voyage, if it is to be prosperous, must at times be against the tide. I always thank our Lord for it, and defend myself only just as much as I consider it my duty, and no more. We shall not live to see it, my dear brother, but if by God's goodness we are admitted into His eternal tabernacles, we shall look down and behold the Institute such that it can no longer be hid, because placed on the mountain. Let us continue in peace, then, and simply beseech our Lord in humility to grant us His grace and His love." Sublime spectacle! A man cast on a raging sea that threatens him with death, gazing across the stormy billows far away to the distant horizon where the calm is undisturbed, and drawing thence light to comfort and encourage himself and his companions. Even so did Jesus of Nazareth amidst the fury of the storm sleep peacefully in the boat, and on awaking, reproach His disciples for their want of faith.

The year 1842 was drawing to a close with no sign of a lull in the storm. Rosmini, who identified his cause with that of the integrity of Catholic doctrine, thought he might end the matter by issuing a more vigorous work, entitled *Rationalism Creeping into the Theological Schools*,[1] and prepared to print it at Milan. Meanwhile the opponents came to hear of it, and the Curia withdrew its permission for publication. It is true that after some explanations the permission was renewed, but in order to avoid any further provocation of his adversaries, already highly incensed, he contented himself with publishing a part of the work in the second edition of his *Treatise on Sin, &c.*

[1] *Il Razionalismo che tenta insinuarsi nelle Scuole Teologiche*, published at Turin, 1882 (Bocca).

Things had reached this stage when an apparently trifling incident occurred, which in God's design was to hasten the close of the drama. In the *Ami de la Religion* of January 3, 1843, it was stated that Rosmini had been highly praised in a recent dissertation by Perrone, and that in Rome he enjoyed the esteem of the Cardinals and the Pope. Father Rozaven, Perrone's brother in religion, at once wrote to the paper, "at the request," he said, "of the interested party" —who could be no other than Perrone—to disown the eulogium. As for the good opinion of the Pope and the Cardinals, he added, with an evident allusion to Lamennais, "We know a more celebrated writer than Rosmini who was also held in high esteem. What has become of him?" And so it came about that a priest of spotless fame, whom the Pope himself had a few years before praised for his genius, doctrine, religion, piety, and great virtue, was placed in the same category as an unhappy apostate, insinuating that he showed symptoms of being a renegade. It is well to state that Perrone never requested any one to write in this way. Three years later he came purposely to Stresa, to explain to Rosmini that he had taken no part in what was written against him; and decried the letter, which had been written absolutely without his knowledge. After leaving Stresa he wrote as follows to Mgr. Scavini: "When you see Father Rosmini, please express the sentiments of esteem, veneration, and love I entertain for him. I would willingly have given my very blood, had I been able, to prevent the wretched disputes which have arisen, at which he is with good reason so much afflicted. I have always held myself utterly aloof, and will never take part in them, though I have more than once been urged to do so." Father Rosmini, thanking him through Mgr. Scavini, at the same time reminded him that it was his duty to make public his repudiation of the letter written in his name: "Let us not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

To return to Rozaven's letter. It came into the hands of

the Pope, who was highly indignant, and appointed a Congregation of seven Cardinals for the 1st of March. After hearing their opinions, he imposed silence on both parties. The decree was sent simultaneously to the General of the Jesuits and to Father Rosmini; the latter at once made it known to the members of the Institute, and sent his thanks to the Holy Father. This decree did not settle the scientific question, but as it left Rosmini free to profess his doctrines in spite of the monstrous accusations brought against them, and protected him from fresh attacks, it was a triumph for him. This was the utmost that prudence permitted the Holy Father to do, for, as he told Castracane, he was not inclined to set on foot again the Congregation *De auxiliis*, and he feared to exasperate the adversaries by a more explicit judgment.

Thus ended the trial, which, if it injured Rosmini in one way, helped his cause in another; for it is one of the wise counsels of Providence that from misfortune, like flowers carried by the breeze, blessings are showered on us. This controversy gave him, in the first place, an opportunity of developing theological doctrines of the highest importance, and tracing accurately the fine distinctions between truth and error, as well as placing the soundness of his doctrines in the clearest light. It was, further, a means of drawing more closely round him the noble company of friends and disciples, and even adding to their number. But perhaps the greatest good produced by this trial is the bright example of humble faith, sublime and loving confidence in God, of long-suffering patience, and of many other virtues left us by Father Rosmini, an example which gained him great merit with God, and remains to edify and comfort his children.

CHAPTER XXII

FATHER ROSMINI'S PROFOUND SUBMISSION TO THE POPE—HIS LABOURS AND THOSE OF HIS INSTITUTE —NEW PUBLICATIONS (1843-1848)

THE precept of silence acted like a breeze that scatters the mists and makes the sky once more serene, though not so completely as to clear it from all obscurity or remove from the air the menace of another storm. Rosmini did not fail to notice that there was no guarantee of a lasting peace; a breath of air is enough to rekindle a smouldering fire. He wrote about the matter to Cardinal Castracane, pointing out the necessity of securing theology from the intrusion of Rationalism and going to the root of the question; he was anxious not to leave his Institute an inheritance of suspicion, and he hoped to bar the way to future injury. Nothing was done, however; Castracane, with all his goodwill, could do but little, and the Pope was not anxious to contend with the adverse party. When Father Rosmini had done what conscience suggested, therefore, he thought only of obeying. He withdrew from circulation all the copies of the second part of the treatise on *Sin* and the proof-sheets on *Rationalism*, and even dissuaded his friends from printing anything on the controverted subjects, though this was not mentioned in the decree; he was too loyal in point of obedience to allow of subtleties or restrictions.

His adversaries were less scrupulous with regard to silence. At Monaco the *Archives of Theological Literature*, for which Passaglia wrote, insinuated that Rosmini was tainted with Baianism; Audisio of Turin, in a work on the *Education of the Clergy*, stigmatised him as a dangerous

innovator, Father Grossi praised up this book in the Piedmontese *Gazette;* while the Curia, with evident partiality, uttered no complaint against this publication, but yet refused Corte permission to print some simple *Considerations* on Rosminian philosophy. Nothing was said at Rome, but the suppressed wrath of the powerful party made itself felt. "The opponents are silent," wrote Castracane, "but they have not changed their sentiments." Rosmini was undisturbed, for he was not accustomed to hope in men or to fear them. "I hope in Him who is called *Deus veritatis*," he wrote to Bertolozzi, "and I hope so securely, that I repose tranquilly in His bosom." To Father Mazzi he says, "I have no fear of anything except sin; I fear neither calumny nor gossip, because they can only do me a passing hurt, and only as much as our Lord has appointed for my good. My teacher on this point, as in all else, is St. Francis of Sales. Provided God be served, it is of little importance whether it be done in good report or evil report, with increase or decrease of our reputation. May He dispose of my honour and good name as He sees best, for all belongs to Him." All these trials did but make him rejoice as the saints are wont to do. "If you could look into my heart," he wrote to a good religious, "you would see it filled with gladness, and you might perhaps wonder at finding that this is chiefly caused by the persecutions to which it has pleased God to subject me."

He was comforted by hearing that Gregory XVI. still felt for him the same kindly regard, asked for news of him, and spoke in his praise. "Rosmini is a priest who has done and is doing much good for the Church, hence I greatly esteem and love him," said the Pope in June 1843 to Mgr. Gava, Bishop of Belluno, and to Jacopo Bernardi, pointing to the works of the Roveretan author which he was about to present to the Seminary of Belluno, and at the same time expressing his satisfaction at having prompted Rosmini to write. In 1845, speaking to Father

Luigi Puecher Passavalli of Trent, afterwards Archbishop of Iconium, he expressed the highest esteem for Rosmini, and ended by saying, "He is the greatest philosopher in the Catholic Church at the present day." Nor was his esteem and affection for the Institute less marked; he even expressed his high opinion of it at a meeting of Cardinals, and extolled it above another Order far more celebrated. In this way he proved to our beloved Founder how faithful he was to his former promise that he would be "entirely and heartily his until death."

Gregory XVI. died on the 1st of June 1846, a day of real anguish to Rosmini, who ordered prayers and Masses for the eternal repose of one who had been to him not only a father, but a protector and a friend. "By the disappearance of this star," he said sorrowfully, "I have lost more than the rest of the faithful." Notwithstanding, he summoned the community to sing the *Te Deum* as soon as the election of the new Pope was announced, and hastened to assure the new Sovereign Pontiff of his filial devotion. Pius IX., a man of upright mind, as yet free from prejudice against Rosmini, replied by a gracious Brief full of esteem, assuring him of his goodwill and favour towards the Institute. In the November of the following year, when Father Setti obtained an audience in order to place the Institute under his protection, the Pope promised to approve it by a Bull in a more solemn form, and to give a direct approval to the Sisters; and further, to approve the College of St. Raphael and to give the Institute a house in Rome, which promises, however, he was unable to fulfil on account of the changes which took place later.

Thus did the pontificate of Pius IX. open with an augury of peace, and the peace promised to be more lasting, because Rosmini's opponents were just then involved in calamities heavy enough to leave them without leisure or inclination to turn their arms against him. Gioberti, in his *Modern Jesuit*, had roused animosity against the Company, and several Governments, beginning with Switzerland,

drove them under ban from their States, confiscated their property, and did not even respect their persons. Father Rosmini, now that he had a little respite, was able to give himself up to the exercise of charity in the Institute and beyond it, and to the philosophical works which had been interrupted by the theological controversy. His first solicitude was for the Institute, now doubly his, because besides being its Founder he had received from the Pope an express command to take on him its government for life. He took delight, not so much in its extension, as in seeing it grow strong in solid virtue, and in the perfection with which its works of charity were carried out. At San Michele, at Calvario, and at the college at Domodossola, the undertakings already alluded to were still pursued. In 1845 new elementary schools were opened at Calice, a little village in the Ossola; in 1846 at Cameri, a large town near Novara. The Father showed his intense interest in these schools by frequent visits to encourage both masters and pupils, and by presiding in person at the distribution of prizes. The novitiate at Stresa was filled with excellent subjects, amongst whom I must mention especially two young clerics, Giuseppe Aimo and Luigi Setti, brother of F. Robert Setti, and a priest, Peter Aloysius Bertetti, formerly Canon of Tortona, whom we shall meet again later on. The numbers also increased so rapidly that it was necessary to enlarge the house. A few years before Paoli had frankly asked the Father why he had built such a large house, and was answered by him, "Ever since 1825 there has been in my heart a profound conviction that God would bless this work, which is not of my seeking, but has come to me on my way; the time will come when the breath of the Lord will summon men from north, south, and west; have no fear." This house had now grown too small; a new wing was necessary besides a church, so that the former oratory might be used as part of the dwelling-house. The first stone of the new building was laid on the 22nd of June 1845 by the Archpriest of Stresa, delegated

by the Bishop of the diocese; two years later the handsome and devotional church, designed by Muraglia, a Milanese architect, was opened and dedicated to our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified. Over the high altar is a painting of the Crucifixion, with Our Lady and St. John at either side of the cross, St. Charles Borromeo kneeling in the foreground. The work was produced in the studio of Overbeck, who painted portions of the picture.

A new and important foundation, from which great good was to be expected, was St. Zeno's at Verona. As far back as 1833 a small house had been opened in that town at St. Pietro Incarnario; Father Boselli was sent there in 1835 on the closing of the house at Trent, and he had laboured there nearly a year with great zeal, especially amongst the victims of the cholera. The archpriest at that time was D. Bartolomeo Gualtieri, who, wishing to provide for the many spiritual and temporal needs of the 4600 souls committed to his care, thought of securing the services of some religious Order by which the good work might be continued after his death, intending to leave the greater part of his property for that purpose; and as Father Boselli had given such great edification, he felt he could not do better than call in the Institute of Charity. He spoke on the subject to Mgr. Grasser, who was overjoyed, and made the necessary overtures to Father Rosmini in 1837; but the excessive caution of the Bishop, and then the petty and interminable cross-examinations of the Government, caused so much delay that the year 1845 was far advanced before any conclusion was arrived at. Still, Rosmini consoled and assisted the aged archpriest by sending him in July two priests of the Institute, Fathers Mazzi and Boselli. A few months later Gualtieri died, and more than a year passed before the imperial decree permitting the Institute to make the foundation could be obtained. In February 1847, Father Toscani, who was to be Superior, was sent to St. Zeno's, and in March, Father Rosmini himself went to take legal possession and set things going. As a new residence in keeping

with the majestic old basilica, and adapted to the requirements of a religious community, would be required near the church of St. Zeno, he purchased some old cottages and gardens to provide a site. In the meantime, to accommodate his priests, he had the former presbytery put into repair, and opened a small novitiate under Father Aimo, a priest, young in years, but of mature judgment and tried virtue. The expenses of the building proved heavy, and Father Rosmini's purse was light enough, but he was not dismayed. "The funds are all in the bank of Providence," he wrote to one friend; and to another, "We are forming great plans, because we know that God is great and is able to carry them out." On his return to Stresa he recalled Father Toscani, who was somewhat stiff and narrow-minded, and did not suit the Veronese; his place was taken by Father Molinari, an excellent and genial priest, large-hearted in the extreme. The Community consisted of six priests, who began to officiate in the church and labour with such zeal in the parish that in a short time they won the esteem and affection of the people and of Bishop Multi,[1] who was never tired of praising them. Pius IX. granted the parish to the Institute in May 1847, and in March 1848 the Curia made it over to them in perpetuity; the sanction of the Austrian Government alone was wanting, when the political horizon became overcast, and the storm burst, carrying away the flowers that gave such promise.

In this and in the following years, Rosmini had to protect the Institute by opposing a vigorous campaign against overbearing pretensions, which would have changed its nature and caused its ruin. We have mentioned the fears of Charles Albert, which had delayed the Government approval of the Apostolic Letters. After the precept of silence, the affair remained at a standstill for three years longer, when the Father thought well to apply for it again. The King promised to despatch the business, and in the course of a month the approval was obtained. The Senate,

[1] He had succeeded to the see of Verona in 1839.

however, either because it had not understood the nature of the poverty professed by the Institute, or because the tide setting in against religious Orders was making itself felt, instead of granting the execution of the Pontifical Letters, added certain conditions which would have quite changed the Institute by taking away the individual right of property and vesting it in the Institute as a body. Rosmini, in a memorial to the King, frankly asked that these conditions might be cancelled, as they would overthrow instead of establishing the Institute. The Minister replied in subtle terms; upon which Father Rosmini endeavoured to keep him to the point with unanswerable arguments, but received only evasive replies. This contest lasted till after the death of Charles Albert, when the Father thought it better to drop the question. The event proved the wisdom of this course, for when, later on, rapacious men endeavoured to despoil the Institute of its property, they got nothing for their pains.

From Italy we now turn to England, where the Institute continued to prosper, so that in 1844 it was constituted into a Province, with Father Pagani as Provincial. In making this nomination Father Rosmini states as his reason "that our brethren serving God in England may have a Father, and that by their labours our Lord Jesus Christ may be the more glorified." Convinced that the supreme end of a religious is his sanctification, he never failed to insist on this point. "The English mission has need of saints," he wrote to one of the Fathers there; "keep your own sanctification always in view as the end of all your labours. Direct all your efforts to the increase of sanctity in yourselves, and in all those who depend on you." Because sanctity is the *unum necessarium*, he wished them to be free from all that anxiety about temporal matters which would show a want of confidence in Providence. "The words of Christ, '*Be not solicitous*,'" he wrote on the 2nd of June 1845, "must be carefully put in practice, and when faithfully observed, this admonition plucks from the

heart the thorn of solicitude, and all uneasiness and disturbance. Has the Institute ever wanted for necessaries? Not in the past, and it will not want in the future, if we confide in God and serve Him." On the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, November 21, 1844, the first novitiate house was opened at Ratcliffe under the title of Calvary because it stood on an eminence, and in memory of Calvario at Domodossola: two years later a college for boys was added. Several new missions were confided to the Institute: Whitwick in 1844, Shepshed and Melton Mowbray in 1845, Newport in 1847, and in 1848 the schools at Hull. Some English and Irish members had already joined the Italian Fathers, and the soil cultivated by their united labour was producing abundant fruit. The most consoling results, however, were effected by the public missions preached by the itinerant missionaries, as they were called. In this work, Father Gentili, who had a remarkable aptitude for it, was destined by the Founder to be chiefly engaged. The labours endured by this holy priest during the few years that still remained to him, and the abundant harvest he reaped, are hardly credible. In 1845 he gave eighteen great public missions, three retreats to religious communities, and seven to ecclesiastics; the next year he did almost as much. These missions lasted ten or fifteen days, sometimes a month, and the number of Protestants who made their abjuration often exceeded a hundred. Father Rosmini's prophetic wish was now fulfilled—a new Augustine had appeared in England. Worn out by these overwhelming labours, the vigour of Gentili's spirit was unable to support his attenuated frame, further enfeebled by his austerities. In September 1848, whilst preaching a mission in Dublin—the third in that year—this athlete of the Lord was struck down by illness, and in a few days sped from the troubled arena to receive his crown. The grief of the people was indescribable; all declared that a saint had passed away. The body lay exposed where it could be visited by devout persons, and

crowds of all classes thronged to touch the bier and take a last look at the venerated features of the man of God. The funeral obsequies were a kind of triumph; the church was packed with people, whilst a multitude surrounded the building, and two bishops officiated. The great bell which had pealed out its welcome to O'Connell on his liberation from prison, and tolled for his death, rang out a solemn knell. The Institute claimed the precious remains, but neither publicly nor privately could they be obtained; so great was the veneration of the people that disturbances would have been inevitable. He was therefore buried near the tomb of the great O'Connell, and devout Irish people may to this day be seen praying at the grave of the humble Roman priest, invoking him as a saint of God.

Father Rosmini devoted to the Sisters of Providence, who were united to him by the golden bond of spiritual charity, the same care as to the Institute. Their good reputation caused requests for new foundations to be made on all sides. In 1845 they were established at Borgomanero, in 1846 at Sartirana, in 1847 at Valle, in 1848 at Cavour. The good seed sown in England also took root and flourished. The two Italian Sisters sent by Rosmini opened a school for children at Loughborough in 1844, and not long after, several English postulants were received, and a novitiate was formed. In 1846 the Duchess of Leeds requested them to found an orphanage in Yorkshire. These humble daughters of Rosmini were chiefly employed in the elementary instruction of girls and of infants both in Italy and in England; indeed they were the first religious who taught elementary day schools in England, though shortly after, many teaching Orders took up the work. Our two Sisters may be called the pioneers in a work which has now attained such colossal proportions. Father Rosmini sent some of the Italian Sisters to Milan to visit the infant schools and pursue a course of studies, in order to render them proficient in the art of education; he also provided a course of lectures on method for the mistresses,

upwards of a hundred in number, so that they might pass the Government examinations. He was called upon to defend the Sisters at Locarno from overbearing exactions, in which he succeeded, and though the burden of government increased with the extension of the Sisters, charity makes all things light. "I did my best to be relieved of these good Sisters," he was heard to say, "but without success; Providence wished me to bear this burden; but in truth, these pious souls deserve every care. I am more than satisfied with them."

The charitable activity of the Father was not confined to the two Institutes: as a man of universal charity he embraced every good in loving desire, and longed to extend his labours to all, had it been possible. We pass over his correspondence of all kinds, with prelates, religious, priests, literary men, philosophers, friends, disciples and spiritual children—a daily exercise of charity, and a sacrifice for one whose time was a treasure of inestimable value—and confine ourselves to a brief mention of some of his many other works of charity. He left his peaceful solitude at Stresa at the invitation of Bishops to repair to the sanctuaries of Piova and Varallo and to preach retreats to the clergy in the seminaries of Vercelli and Lodi. Remembering the wants of the peasants of St. Hilary's at Rovereto, he sent a priest at his own expense to instruct them in their Christian duties, and had a mission preached for their special benefit. Two promising medical students at the University of Turin were furnished by him with means which they could not provide themselves. He contributed a thousand florins to the elementary schools at Rovereto, regretting that he could do no more. The good Father's heart was inexpressibly grieved at the distress of the poor people dying of famine in Ireland. He devoted himself with loving anxiety to procure them assistance, and collected several thousand lire to send for the relief of the poor sufferers. It is a noble exercise of intellectual charity to encourage gifted minds and help them to produce worthy and useful fruit; we see

him with this object suggesting to Tarditi subjects for his lectures as professor, and partly developing them himself; again, he urges Toscani to translate Karpe's *Ethics* and Tommaseo to render Plato's works into Italian, promising to annotate the translations. He also encouraged Cantù to bring out a *History of the Church*, and Balbo to write a work on the *Means by which Italians may secure Prosperity without infringing the Laws.*

The chief work—intellectual in its nature, but rendered spiritual by its object—to which, as a conscientious obligation, he devoted all the time he could spare from urgent duties, was the pursuit of study. Now that he had extricated himself from the thorny thicket of theological controversy, he resumed his studies with renewed ardour, and these years are perhaps the most fruitful in his life of thought. In 1844 he wrote the *System of Philosophy*[1] for Cantù in less than a month. This work is of great importance, tracing as it does in a few bold lines the complete design of Rosmini's scientific encyclopedia. Starting from the clear definition of Philosophy, he divides philosophical sciences into three grand classes, which he terms the sciences of *intuition*, of *perception*, and of *reasoning*, according as they treat of the means of knowing which we possess by intuition, or of the real beings which we know by perception, or of what we acquire by reasoning on the beings perceived. In the first class are comprised *Ideology* and *Logic;* in the second, *Psychology* and *Cosmology;* in the third, *Ontology*, which treats of *being* as it is, and *Deontology*, which treats of *being* as it ought to be. He gives a brief but clear exposition of each of these sciences.

In 1845 he wrote his treatise on *Vincenzo Gioberti and Pantheism*[2] and the *Compendium of Ethics* for Sciolla, who put it into Latin and used it as his text-book at the university: in 1844–45 he wrote the *Theodicy;*[3] between

[1] *Sistema Filosofico*, published by the Società-Editrice, Turin, 1845. Translated into English. Published by Kegan Paul, London, 1882.

[2] *V. Gioberti e il Panteismo*, published by Giusti, Lucca, 1853.

[3] *Teodicea*, published by the Società-Editrice, Turin, 1857.

1843 and 1846 the *Psychology*;[1] in 1846 he began his *Theosophy*,[2] concluded the *Essay on Categories* and the *Dialectics*,[3] and worked hard at the *Ontology* till 1848. Many minor works were the outcome of his industry during the year, such as his short commentary on the *Magnificat*, written at the instance of the Marchese Cavour; a discourse on the *Testimony of the Koran to the Blessed Virgin*,[4] which was read at the Roman Academy of the Catholic Religion by Cardinal Castracane; *First Principles of Prince C. Lowenstein's System of Christian Philosophy*, to which he added notes; a brief *Answer* to Gioberti's objections; another discourse on *Christian Matrimony*, composed at the request of Count Solaro della Margarita, on occasion of his daughter's marriage in 1847. In the same year he produced a discourse on *Communism and Socialism*,[5] at the urgent request of Cardinal Soglia, to prove the outrageous absurdity of these two systems, and show how fatal they are to true liberty and progress. About this time he wrote for Professor Tarditi fifty theses on *Philosophical Method*,[6] showing its application to *Psychology* and *Natural Theology*.

His increasing reputation as a wise and learned priest induced many persons illustrious for their dignity, virtue, and learning to turn to him in the hour of need as a counsellor, master, and guide. Mgr. Samuelli, Bishop of Montepulciano, Mgr. Moreno, Bishop of Ivrea, Mgr. Ghilardi of Mondovì, and Mgr. Gentili of Novara, had recourse to him for counsel and assistance in the affairs of their dioceses; Mgr. Luquet, Bishop of Hesebon, consulted him

[1] *Psicologia*, published by Miglio, Novara, 1848. English translation, Kegan Paul, 1880.

[2] *Teosofia*, published by Bertolotti, Intra, 1874.

[3] *Categorie e Dialettica*, published at Turin (Unione Tipografica), 1883.

[4] *Magnificat e Testimonianze dal Corano a Maria Vergine*, published by Desclée, Lefebvre & Cie. in *Alcuni Scritti sopra Maria*, Rome, 1904.

[5] *Il Communismo ed il Socialismo*, published in *Libreria Nazionale*, Naples, 1848.

[6] *Metodo filosofico*, published in *Scritti Vari*, by the Società-Editrice, Turin, 1883.

about the training of the Indian clergy. Others submitted to him questions on high metaphysics, theology, and judicial and canon law, relying on his guidance to show them a way out of their difficulties: amongst these, to name only a few, were Tarditi, Pestalozza, Gastaldi, Caroli, Sciolla, and Barciulli. Many even from distant places came to him in person to enjoy the benefit of his virtue and erudition; amongst these foreigners we may note Lacordaire, Count Bielinscki, the Abbé de Courson, Vicar-General of Nantes, the Abbés Blatairou and Meignan, professors from Bordeaux and Paris; and amongst Italians, Mgr. Bini from Lucca, Tullio Dandolo, Berti, Rayneri, and Buroni. Between 1844 and 1848 ten academies of science, art, and letters in Italy, besides the French Academy, were proud to enrol him as a member.

The humble priest made little account of these honours; but he rejoiced to find that now, when the theological controversy was at an end, and Gioberti's invectives were dying down, his philosophical doctrines were beginning to make some advance. Among his new adherents were Vezzosi, Professor of Philosophy at the seminary at Bagnorea, Caroli at Ferrara, and Micheli in the Tolomei College at Siena. Still more was he pleased to see how steadfast were the convictions of those who had once embraced his philosophy—a proof, in his opinion, of the truth of the system. Yet he made no efforts to gain followers, nor did he reckon too easily on the success of his teaching. He wrote to Barola, "I am not in the least anxious, nor am I solicitous about the result of my labours, with regard to which I trust that Providence will direct all to the triumph of Truth and to the greater glory of God, which alone I love, and which is my only good." "It always has been and is a leading law of the all-wise Providence of God," he wrote to Gastaldi, "that one should sow and another should reap. This thought is a marvellous source of comfort, and I beseech our Lord to grant me two things: first, that I should not mix my tares with His wheat; and the second,

that He will give increase to His seed, and destroy my tares before they come up, if I should chance to sow any. The time of the harvest gives me no anxiety, for I know well that God does all things in their proper season, for *omnia tempus habent:* and early fruit is often unripe and sour." History proved to him that centuries are required to make some doctrines accessible, and none knew better than he the difficulties and the sublime nature of his own. Nevertheless his gaze, passing over the intervening centuries, rested with calm confidence on the distant future. Even so the husbandman, when he entrusts his hopes to Mother Earth, is not sad or disheartened because the winter snows cast over them its mantle of white, but his heart rejoices to see them thus hidden away, and he looks forward to the balmy breezes of spring for early flowers, and to the later season for abundance of fruit.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ITALIAN REVIVAL—ROSMINI AT MILAN AND AT ROME (1848)

THE Pontificate of Pius IX. seemed to promise an era of blessings for the Church and for Italy. The liberal reforms granted by the Sovereign Pontiff aroused the greatest enthusiasm amongst the people, who looked on him as an angel sent from heaven. Charles Albert and Leopold of Tuscany followed the example set by the Pope; all the Italian provinces, especially the Lombardo-Venetian territory, on which the Austrian dominion weighed heavily, were agitated by a desire for liberty. Austria felt the ground giving way beneath her feet, and old Prince Metternich, who had satirically styled Italy *a geographical expression*, was amazed, and began to think seriously when he saw her arouse herself in earnest. Rosmini, whose sympathies were altogether Italian, could not help rejoicing at the religious auspices under which this revival of Italy was begun. "I am watching events in Italy with great interest," he wrote to a friend, "and I think the hand of God is visible amidst the intrigues of men, therefore I rejoice." Faithful, however, to his maxims, he remained quietly in retirement, content to aid men of goodwill by his counsel, and to implore Almighty God to direct the minds of all in the paths of truth, justice, and religion, the *real Palladium of Italian liberty*. When, at the first mention of a Constitution, Father Paoli ventured to say that it was time for him to come forward, the Father replied, "You are too confident; you do not know mankind sufficiently; in any case, it is not fitting that we should interfere in these matters without an invitation, or some sign of the will of God."

The year 1848 opened: the Italian princes granted a Constitution, and Pope Pius IX. resolved to do the same. When the first rumour of this reached Rosmini he began to fear that it would be a defective Constitution, copied from foreign sources as the others were, and he wrote to Gilardi at Rome: "I am in great anxiety about Roman affairs, although I know that in heaven above are St. Peter and the Master who sent him. Rome should either be content with what has been done, or produce a work truly Roman, original, worthy of the Pontiff-king, something which might serve as a model to the whole world. I should like to propose such a Constitution if I were asked; I leave it all to your prudence; take counsel with God, and say nothing to any one, unless it be to his Eminence Cardinal Castracane, if God inspires you so to do." Castracane expressed his pleasure at the proposal, and the Father then drew up the plan of a Constitution for the Pontifical States, which he sent to the Cardinal, telling him that it was the fruit of twenty years' reflection. Its chief aim was to secure political justice and the rights of property by establishing a political tribunal and proportional suffrage; he recommended great deliberation, lest the result should be unsatisfactory, or, like the Constitution granted in the other States, a mere copy of the French. These cautions and advice were too late; fear of the populace had hurried on the promulgation of the Constitution in Rome itself. On hearing this, Rosmini simply exclaimed, "It is a sign that it was not God's will," and he resumed his wonted calmness. However, the Roman Statute seemed to him the best of its kind, and with the idea that it might be partially amended, he continued to set down his suggestions and send them to Castracane.

Whilst Rome was celebrating the proclamation of the Constitution with great rejoicings, political changes were hastening on: Milan, freed from Austrian occupation, appointed a Provisional Government; at Venice people were calling for a republic; Charles Albert crossed the Ticino

and joined his forces with the Lombard army. Rosmini first ordered suffrages for those who had fallen in battle, and then prayers for God's blessing on Italy; on the 1st of April he set out for Milan to congratulate its brave citizens and publish there a political pamphlet. His friends gave him a hearty reception, and Archbishop Romilli, as well as Gabrio Casati, the head of the Provisional Government, welcomed him with great respect, glad to avail themselves of his advice in such a crisis. With perfect frankness he suggested to both, the true means of cementing the union of religion with love of country. To promote the public good they must begin by restoring the rights of the Church, then secure the speedy union of Lombardy and Piedmont in one kingdom, and invite the co-operation of the Italian princes in the war being waged by Charles Albert. Only a small portion of this wise advice was followed. The work he issued at Milan during the month he spent there was *The Constitution according to Social Justice*,[1] with an appendix on the *Unity of Italy*, a union which he wished to be federal, with a Diet at Rome presided over by the Sovereign Pontiff. At the same time he printed another little work at Lugano, *The Five Wounds of the Church*, a treatise written fifteen years previously; an outlet, as it were, for the sadness he felt at the evils with which the Spouse of Christ was afflicted. The *Five Wounds*—and probably the *Constitution* as well—was seen by Pius IX., who was evidently not displeased, as we may gather from the desire he repeatedly expressed to have the author at Rome, and to raise him to the highest dignity in the Church.

The fortune of war at first smiled on Charles Albert, and Pius IX., seeing "something more than human" in the course of events, wrote the King some words of encouragement, but could not himself resolve to break with Austria. In his uncertainty, the Pope often remarked to Cardinal Castracane how glad he would have been to have Rosmini at hand; but the latter, not seeing in these vague expres-

[1] *Costituzione secondo la Giustizia Sociale*, published by Ducci, Florence, 1848.

sions any clear sign of the will of God, always excused himself. "If the Holy Father asked for me directly," he wrote to Gilardi, "I should not hesitate a moment about going, although with some natural repugnance, knowing that I should have much to suffer; but the remark made by the Pope to a third person that he would like to see me in Rome is not a summons. I fear these half terms, by which my simplicity has more than once been entrapped. If I am wanted there, they must speak plainly to induce me to move." The plain words were not spoken, and he remained where he was.

Whilst Pius IX. was still undecided, his little army, sent to protect the frontiers, crossed the Po, and advanced to the assistance of the combatants for Italian independence, whereupon the Ministry sent a message to the Pope urging him to declare war. But the Holy Father in an *Allocution* of the 29th of April, declared that he, the minister of the God of peace, could take no part in the war. The *Allocution* embittered the minds of many, especially in Rome; and for this reason the Pope, in order to appease them, issued a proclamation to his subjects, and wrote a letter to Charles Albert stating that he had no intention of condemning the spirit of nationality which animated the Italians; indeed, he sent a letter full of paternal affection to the Emperor of Austria, urging that his people should confine themselves to their own country, recognise Italy as a sister-nation, and convert into friendly relations that iron rule which could never be happy or lasting.

Rosmini admired the meekness, prudence, and evangelical spirit displayed by Pius IX.; but measuring with prophetic eye the abyss into which an incautious step might cast the Pope and Italy, he wrote several admirable letters to Father Gilardi and Cardinal Castracane, proofs of his attachment to the Holy See and to Italy, no less than of his political discernment in predicting future events from present circumstances. He pointed out in the first place the different condition of things under which Pius VII.

had refused to make an alliance with Napoleon, because the war then in question was neither national nor just, but a war of ambition and conquest. He remarked that the character of Father of the faithful does not detract from his title of prince with its inherent duties; and that if the world became convinced that the Pope could not wage war, it would conclude that the temporal power was incompatible with the Papacy, and the States of the Church would be lost. Hence the question of the war is reduced to two points: its utility and its justice. Its utility is quite clear; its justice, it seems hardly possible to doubt, considering the blunders, the injustice, the immorality, and irreligion of the Austrian Government. One way indeed there was of evading war, and Rosmini pointed it out to the Pontiff with prophetic daring: it was, to assume boldly the guardianship of nationality, particularly the German, and to espouse the cause of Catholic Austria rather than Protestant Prussia in the reconstruction of the Empire, and so to recoup Austria for what she would lose in Italy, by extending her possessions in Germany. Given the war without the Pope's intervention, however, Rosmini clearly saw that one of two things would result from it: either the Italians would be vanquished, and the nation would blame the Holy Father for their misfortunes; or it would succeed, and then, emboldened by success, they would avenge themselves on him for the obstacle he had thrown in their way by refusing his concurrence. Anger and ill-will would result in a rupture between the Italians and the Pontiff, ending sooner or later in the loss of the temporal power. He concluded by saying that if irritated spirits were to be calmed and the evil designs of political sects frustrated, the possessions of the Roman Church preserved and her glory increased, it was necessary for the Pope to co-operate as far as he could in liberating Italy from the foreign yoke.

This language, respectful but candid, was not displeasing to Pius IX., for he once more showed his desire to have

Rosmini at Rome. But the Father, as if his heart forewarned him of coming tribulation, wrote to Gilardi, "I tremble when I consider the possibility of being called, because I do not feel strong enough to encounter the misfortunes that might befall me there, or even the good fortune, as the world would call it. The very repugnance I have to it seems to indicate that God does not will it. I do not want to go and waste my time in Rome, with the risk of annoying certain personages to whom I should not in the least pay court." He therefore stayed on at Stresa, yet not idle, or indifferent to the good of the Church and the nation; from his retirement he helped Mgr. Romilli by counsel, encouraged associations formed for the protection of religion and liberty, expressed in the *Risorgimento* his views upon a *Constitution for the Kingdom of Northern Italy*, and above all, he prayed that the political horizon, which day by day grew darker, might be illumined with light from above.

In June and July the fortunes of war in Lombardy turned against Charles Albert; for, ill-provided with money, provisions, and men, he was obliged to fall back on Milan, unable to withstand the armed legions poured down by Austria from the Tyrol. It was a critical moment. Gabrio Casati was then at the head of the Piedmontese Ministry, and Gioberti was his colleague; both were convinced that help must be sought from the other Italian powers, and from the Pope, first of all. A man must be found whose uprightness, political wisdom, and ardent love for religion and his country would commend him to Pius IX., while he must be capable of transacting the difficult business with prudence; Casati at once fixed on Rosmini, and Gioberti approved of his choice. Rosmini, at the suggestion of his doctor, had just gone a few days before to St. Bernardino de' Grigioni to recruit his health, when, on the 31st of July an urgent message arrived from Casati begging that he would repair to Turin, and, in the interests of the State, undertake an extremely important mission to the

Holy Father. Such an invitation, in this grave crisis of his country, appeared to him a certain sign that God required the sacrifice ; he left Switzerland without delay, and reached Turin on the 2nd of August.

On the 3rd he had an interview with Casati and Gioberti, and was present at the Ministerial Council. On hearing that his mission was to induce the Pope to make war on Austria, he replied that he could not undertake it, for he saw no possibility of inducing the Pope to take that step. He stated the Holy Father's reasons for refusing to make war—the doubt as to whether it was just and proper for the Pontifical State to do so ; the suspicion that an Italian republic was secretly aimed at, or one kingdom under the House of Savoy ; and the hostility to religion manifested by the Piedmontese Government. Then with words of frank and dignified severity he upbraided the Government with the abuse launched by the Parliament against the clergy and the Pope, with its infringement of ecclesiastical rights, with the unbridled license of the press, and with the violent attitude of the populace towards certain religious Orders. He concluded by saying that the first thing necessary was to inspire the Holy See with confidence and security. At this unusual freedom of speech the Ministers, with the exception of Gioberti, showed some displeasure ; soon, however, they cooled down, and asked his advice. His proposal was for a pacific mission to negotiate for (1) a Concordat, having the liberty of the Church as its foundation, and (2) a Confederation of Italian States under the presidency of the Pope, the negotiations to be opened by an autograph letter from the King to Pius IX. The proposal was accepted, and on the same day Ratazzi and Gioberti brought him a paper of instructions, entreating him to start for Rome, where he would find papers and credentials in the usual form. The instructions, drawn up in Gioberti's handwriting, bore no signature, and were not quite in keeping with what had been agreed upon ; Casati, the Prime Minister, knew nothing about them—a

sad omen for Rosmini, who saw from the first that the matter was not treated loyally or consistently. He went to Casati, who gave him a despatch for the King, and leaving Turin he arrived at Novara early on the 5th of August.

Here he found swarms of troops, great confusion, and uncertainty as to the King's movements. As soon as he heard that Charles Albert had evacuated Milan and taken up a position at Vigevano, he hastened thither, and had an audience on the 10th. The King was depressed and worn out; on reading the Ministerial despatch, he approved the project, and seemed especially pleased with the Concordat on account of the good which would result from it. Then, alluding to the attitude of the press and of certain deputies, he said, "See how they have drawn down vengeance on us instead of God's blessing." On the 11th, Rosmini set out for Rome with the King's letter for the Pope, taking Toscani as his secretary and Carli as attendant, or brother assistant, as he called him. They arrived on the 15th, and took up their quarters in the Palazzo Albani.

His first act was to call upon the Marchese Pareto, the Sardinian Envoy to the Holy See, who was to provide him with the credentials promised at Turin; but none had arrived, for Casati's Ministry had fallen more than a week before. On the 17th he was received in audience by Pius IX., who read the King's letter with much satisfaction, and did not appear at all averse to forming a Confederation; with regard to the Concordat, he referred him to Antonelli. Then, with an affectionate glance, he said to Rosmini, "You did not want to come and stay in Rome near the Pope; now I will put you in prison, and not allow you to depart any more." Upon this he thanked the Holy Father, and answered that he was unworthy to be near the Pope, and had come, in spite of his repugnance, lest he should resist God's will by refusing to help the Sardinian Government, which was in great straits; he would now leave it all in the hands of the Holy Father. Four days later Cardinal Castracane enlightened him as to the threatened

imprisonment by telling him, in the name of the Sovereign Pontiff, that he was to prepare for the Cardinalate. Rosmini, amazed at such an announcement, asked for time to consider it, and four days later presented himself before the Pope to thank him for his benignity, and beg to be excused from such a heavy burden. He said that at the first announcement he remembered our Lord's words to St. Peter, "When thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not";[1] he gave his reasons for dreading the dignity, and stated that, saving an express command of the Holy Father, the Constitutions forbade him to accept it without the consent of the Institute; if it came to the worst, he begged leave to consult the Fathers. His Holiness replied that he was welcome to consult the Institute, but it would make no difference; the Cardinalate, which might have been an object of ambition in former times, was now only a burden and a sign of contradiction.

Rosmini thereupon wrote to the two Provincials, Puecher and Pagani, about the impending trial, desiring them to inform the Presbyters privately, that they might direct him to accept or refuse the proposed dignity. Meanwhile he consulted Father Vincent Pallotta, who was considered a saint, to beg the aid of his advice and prayers. The votes of the Presbyters soon arrived: ten were for, one against; the one who voted against the acceptance was Father Toscani, who was with him in Rome as secretary. There was another person, neither priest nor cleric, who opposed the acceptance of the dignity with all his might; this was Brother Carli. The good Tyrolese, who could hardly read or write, was wonderfully quick-witted, and possessed remarkable tact in practical matters, while his devotedness to his spiritual Father knew no bounds. Now, having been commissioned to provide what was requisite for the Cardinalate, Carli went about the work with a heavy heart, and was never tired of saying, in his straightforward way, "Father, do not accept the Cardinalate; you would do

[1] St. John xxi. 18.

great harm to yourself and the Institute and to the poor of Christ." He shook his head when he saw the crowds, who, at the first announcement, flocked to do homage to the new Cardinal; his glance, rendered keen by affection, seemed to see in all these new faces, and in their bows and smiles, not mere courtly manners, but treachery. "In charity," he said to the Father, "beware of those flatterers; you are too simple. Don't you see that they come to entrap you in conversation?" The good Father rebuked him; for his own part, he was much more afraid of harbouring unjust suspicion than of being deceived. As to the Cardinalate, he told the brother that he must appeal to the Presbyters, who alone could forbid him to accept it. The good brother did not wait to be told twice; he wrote to the Provincials in Italy and in England and to the Superior at Verona, begging them to oppose the step with all their might. Seeing that he was preaching to the winds, he told the Father one day that he wanted to go to the Pope and beg him not to make him a Cardinal. Rosmini replied that the Rule does not forbid any one to appeal from the immediate Superior to a higher one. That was enough for Carli; he asked and obtained an audience with the Pope. Rosmini never complained of this or reproved him, but only said, smiling, "I did not think you capable of it." The good brother's efforts had no success with Pius IX., but the malice and envy of enemies accomplished what the affection of a devoted son had failed to compass. Let us now return to the political mission.

As soon as his first audience with the Pope was over, Father Rosmini wrote to inform the King, asking also for the necessary credentials. Meanwhile, to save time, he began to draw up a plan for the Confederation between the Government of the Pontifical States and those of Sardinia and Tuscany, conferring with Mgr. Corboli-Bussi, who was appointed by the Holy Father, as well as with Pareto and Bargagli, Ministers of Tuscany, who met at the Palazzo Albani on the 26th, 29th, and 31st of August. The docu-

ment, drafted by Rosmini and approved by his colleagues, was presented to Pius IX., who appeared to favour it, and said it should be examined by a Congregation of Cardinals as soon as the Sardinian Government had accepted it. Rosmini was by no means sanguine about its success, but, as he said to Corboli, having no hope, he still laboured as if he hoped to gain everything, considering it his duty; the result he would leave to Providence.

On the 30th of August, nothing having come from the new Government of Turin, he wrote to Perrone, who was at the head of the Ministry, giving an account of his mission, and urging him, if he had the good of his country at heart, to send an immediate despatch. A few days later he wrote again, stating his opinion that it was, to say the least, imprudent for Piedmont alone to make war on Austria; other zealous patriots, such as C. Balbo, M. d'Azeglio, and V. Gioberti, were of the same opinion, and he strongly recommended the Confederation, enclosing a copy of the plan which Pius IX. had so favourably received. He hoped by this means to force the Minister to put an end to his uncertainty, and take a step of some kind. Just then the credentials arrived, with instructions that restricted his mission to two points: first, to secure the Pope's co-operation in the war against Austria; second, to negotiate for a political league between the Italian States. There was no mention of the Concordat, if we except the question of ecclesiastical immunity, which was left chiefly in the hands of Pareto. Thus Rosmini perceived that the tenor of his mission was changed point blank. Nevertheless, faithful to his maxim of not giving up a good work once undertaken as long as a gleam of hope remained, he stayed at his post. He replied to Perrone, and repeated what he had said before, adding wise suggestions, and promising to assist Pareto with respect to the immunity; at the same time he continued to confer with his colleagues at the Palazzo Albani, and drew up a memorandum to facilitate the Confederation. The Minister at Turin, however, seemed

incapable of coming to a decision; he delayed giving an answer about the Confederation on pretence of judging the matter maturely; he displeased the Pope by approving popular violence against the religious Orders; his dilatoriness and subterfuges gave rise to suspicions of the sincerity of his policy; and he certainly showed a want of practical judgment in appreciating the situation. Rosmini had pointed out these things to the Sardinian Minister, but seeing that his words were thrown away, and that the Ministry only wanted to substitute an offensive League against Austria in place of the proposed Confederation, he wrote for the last time to inform Perrone of the political principles prevalent at Rome, and the impossibility of drawing the Holy Father into the war. In conclusion he advised him to send a more skilful diplomatist to Rome, some one convinced of the expediency and probable success of the new project, which he (Rosmini) was not. Only the last words of this letter were understood, and the resignation was accepted. In order to carry out as fully as possible the mission first confided to him, Rosmini wrote a brief memorandum on the project of a League received from Turin, and it probably reached the Ministry. Thus ended the diplomatic mission entrusted to him by the Piedmontese Government.

At Rome, on the fall of the Fabri Ministry, all felt the need of a man of firm character, with practical good sense enough to see how far that which was desirable could really be carried out, a point in which skilful government chiefly consists. Rosmini saw no one better qualified to do this than Pellegrini Rossi; he mentioned him to Pius IX., who hesitated at first; he also spoke to Rossi, and found him willing to try to restore public order if the Pope would place full confidence in him. On the 15th of September 1848, the Rossi Ministry was announced, but Rosmini soon became anxious, finding that the Holy Father had not only given Rossi his confidence, but conferred unlimited powers on him, which he used to secure everything for himself.

Rossi himself filled three offices, his colleagues were either weak or young and inexperienced, and thus compelled to lean on him for support; and worse still, he irritated the Romans by his stern and almost contemptuous bearing; in fact, his Ministry was almost a dictatorship. Rosmini represented to the Pope and Mgr. Soglia, Secretary of State, that such a Minister was certain to involve the Sovereign in ruin, unless some colleague were found to counterbalance this excessive power. It never occurred to him that he himself might be selected for such a post. However, rumours were circulated in Rome that as soon as Rosmini had been created Cardinal, the Pope would make him Secretary of State; Mgr. Stella, who was at that time his friend, and was in the Holy Father's confidence, plainly told him so, and offered his congratulations. Rosmini, horrified, said much in reply to prove his own inexperience and incapacity. At the same time Pius IX. honoured him with special tokens of affection, invited him to dine with him at the Quirinal, announced that he was to be created Cardinal at the December Consistory, and nominated him Consultor of the Index and of the Holy Office.

One of the matters which Rossi took upon himself in his mania for government was the question of the Confederation or Italian League, a concern of the Minister for Foreign affairs. No sooner did he find himself in power than he raised suspicions and fears in the Pope's mind regarding the Confederation proposed by Rosmini and his colleagues at the Palazzo Albani, saying that he would draw up a better one; and to this the Pope consented. The plan was soon prepared, but it only served to confuse the tangled skein still more. Rosmini was not long in making a minute and strict examination of the new scheme, and proving that it could not stand in any respect; it was inconsistent with the interests and the dignity of the Holy See, with the constitutional system, and with public opinion; neither did it provide for Italian nationality, while its tendency would be to exasperate rather than to calm the people.

Rossi, a man of high intellectual powers, refined by study and experience, and a strong and active personality, did much good during the short time he piloted the Roman Government, and might have materially assisted in the political arrangements of Italy, had he not alienated thoughtful men by his harsh and dictatorial pretensions, and afforded the demagogues an excuse for rousing the mob against him as an enemy of Italian liberty. On the 15th of November the Chambers were to re-open; Rossi had been warned by several that his life was threatened, but, whether he disbelieved the report or did not fear the threats, he resolved to be present. Father Rosmini, who with Pareto had arrived early, felt very anxious, because he knew how the Ministry was hated by the advanced party, and he had observed the sinister expression on many faces in the crowd outside, together with their piercing glances and ominous silence. Soon, loud hissing and shouting were heard, though they could not quite tell from what quarter; then renewed hissing followed by silence: the deed was done! A few moments and some one whispered into Pareto's ear, "Rossi has been assassinated!" Rosmini turned to Pareto. "Let us go at once," he said, and they hastened out. It was not fear that made him leave the Chamber, but his filial affection for the Sovereign Pontiff. Convinced that any sign of weakness on the part of the Government would render it impossible to restore order, he went straight to the Quirinal and recommended three things to be done without delay; to send to Bologna for General Zucchi, to form a Ministry that very day, and to institute proceedings against the assassin immediately. Only the first of these three suggestions was feasible, for the Ministers had all disappeared except Montanari, and the Justices dared not institute an inquiry, so great was their fear of the stiletto.

Next day (16th November 1848), the Revolution broke out. The mob clamoured for Ministers of their own choosing, and a disorderly crowd surrounded the Quirinal

to obtain the Pope's sanction for the new Ministry. Pius IX. sent word that violence would wrest nothing from him. They then turned on the Swiss Guards, fired into their windows and killed the Pope's secretary, Mgr. Palma, tried in vain to burn or burst open the doors of the palace, and at last attempted to batter them down with cannon. The good Pope, to avoid bloodshed, granted them the Ministry, protesting against the violence employed, and the excited crowd then paraded the city rejoicing over their victory. Rosmini, who with the deepest anguish had witnessed this sacrilegious scene from his windows, retired, quite worn out, to rest a little when the crowd dispersed. Shortly after a letter was brought to him from Galletti, one of the craftiest leaders of the demagogues, announcing that His Holiness had named him President of the Ministry with the control of the Education Department, and that on the following day the Ministers would meet at his residence. He was stunned at this information, and having serious doubts as to whether the Pope had made the nomination of his own accord, he at once sent Father Toscani to the Quirinal to ascertain the truth, being fully determined to accept it only at the direct command of the Holy Father, in which case he was fully prepared to sacrifice his life. The Pope replied that he could have wished Rosmini to accept, because then he would have been as a bulwark to him, but now he feared that he would be overpowered. This answer was enough; that same evening Rosmini went to the Quirinal to give in his resignation. Early next morning he quitted the house, leaving a letter for Galletti in which he plainly stated that honour and conscience alike prevented him from being a party to an unconstitutional Ministry, nominated by the Pope under constraint. This courageous act pleased the Holy Father, who sent Montanari to express his thanks. Rosmini, by way of precaution, passed that day, the 17th of November, with the Duc d'Harcourt, the French Ambassador, at the Palazzo Colonna, where he learnt from Cardinal Orioli of the Pope's

secret intention of leaving Rome, and received from Orioli himself a blank passport form, signed by Cardinal Soglia.

He went to the Quirinal next morning to ascertain whether the Sovereign Pontiff wished him to follow him from Rome; he could not think of abandoning the Holy Father in these straits, nor did he presume to follow him of his own accord. Antonelli, who was in the antechamber, seemed surprised that Rosmini should be aware of the Pope's intentions, and tried at first to dissemble; he said he would speak to the Pope, and returned in a few minutes with this reply: "The Holy Father bids me tell you that, in case he should leave Rome, he will be pleased to see you where he takes up his abode." Now that he knew the Pope's wishes, the Father went to Albani, just outside the city, where he waited in readiness to depart. He at once informed Mgr. Stella where he was, that he might acquaint the Holy Father, at whose feet he placed himself, that he might dispose of his goods, his person, and his life itself. Stella made no reply, and this was the first sign of his change of feeling towards Rosmini. For eight days the latter stayed at Albani in retirement, by no means idle, but using his pen and his advice for the service of the Church and the Pope.

Whilst he was celebrating Mass on the 25th, Count Gabriello Mastai, the Pope's brother, arrived to tell him that Pius IX. had fled from Rome the previous night, and was on his way to Gaeta. Rosmini prepared to start at once; he filled in the blank passport—supplied so opportunely by Oriolo—with his own name, that of his secretary, and those of two attendants. Under one of these names Montanari escaped. Rosmini and Toscani entered one carriage, Mastai and Montanari followed in the other. On the morning of the 26th, having fulfilled their obligation of hearing Mass at Fondi, they arrived at Gaeta, and went at once to the "Giardinetto," a miserable inn where Pius IX. had taken shelter. At first sight of them Antonelli appeared alarmed, fearing, perhaps, that the secret would

be divulged too soon; he introduced Count Gabriello and Montanari, leaving Rosmini in the antechamber, but the Pope sent for him at once. As soon as they had paid their respects to the Vicar of Christ in that humble room they retired, so as not to attract attention, and Antonelli, disguised as a secular, took them to the commander of the garrison, who had heard rumours of the Pope's flight, but did not know he was so near. About mid-day two steamboats arrived from Naples with the King and Queen on board and two battalions of soldiers. Then the secret was known. The Pope was conducted to the royal palace and overwhelmed with tokens of respect and veneration by the Sovereigns, so that, though he had intended to go elsewhere after a brief stay, he now resolved to remain a few days and see what turn events would take. Count Gabriello stayed with the Pope; Rosmini and Montanari were cordially entertained by Canon Orgero, Professor of Philosophy, who knew Rosmini's works.

Thus Pius IX. fled from his own city of Rome, and Father Rosmini, out of filial love for the Pope, chose to share his exile, hoping, or at least desiring, to alleviate its bitterness. Who would have anticipated that such generous devotion would be requited as it was at the hands of men?

CHAPTER XXIV

GAETA AND NAPLES—ROSMINI'S TRIALS AT GAETA, NAPLES, AND ALBANO—HIS RETURN TO STRESA (1848–1849)

THE Pope's flight, after the disorders at Rome, was but an act of prudence recommended by Father Rosmini himself; but the details of his departure, its time and place, were arranged by Antonelli and Count Spaur, the Bavarian Minister, who was said to be under the spell of Austria and Naples. Antonelli was the moving spirit of the Holy Father's flight and of all political action of the Pontifical court; the other Cardinals were quite disregarded. Rosmini did not fail to suggest to the Pope the necessity of consulting the Sacred College, but his words were lost; Pius IX. had surrendered himself into Antonelli's hands without reserve, and although he saw Rosmini daily, and liked to discuss with him all that had been done, he never consulted him about the future. Still, these conversations gave him an opportunity of stating his opinions, and occasionally even of venturing to offer some respectful suggestions, but there it ended; nearly always, Antonelli would slily intrude with a freedom far from respectful to the august person of the Sovereign Pontiff, for he feared the Pope would be induced to adopt a broader and milder policy than he himself proposed. The Cardinal's plan was to let affairs in Rome run to extremes, and then call in Austria to clear the ground of every Liberal institution, and establish the form of government best suited to his own taste. The event soon proved the folly of his designs.

One of the acts inspired by Antonelli's policy was the *Motu proprio* of the 27th of November, in which the Pope

protested once more against the violence employed against him, and constituted a Commission of seven, under the presidency of Cardinal Castracane. Rosmini, at the first tidings of this *Motu proprio*, before it was published, went to the Pope to try to dissuade him from issuing it; he showed that the Commission would be a sort of hybrid, unconstitutional, impracticable, even dangerous. He suggested that a Government might be formed at Bologna, where the people were devoted to His Holiness; thus his faithful subjects would be reassured, and the goodwill of the others might be regained. To Antonelli also he represented that the document ought at least to have the signature of some Minister, to escape the criticism of the disaffected. The Pope smiled, and said that even should the Commission never sit, it would suffice to show that the Pope had not left his States without a Government; Cardinal Antonelli evaded the question with subtle arguments. This Commission appeared, in fact, foolish to many; some thought it a trap, and a still greater number regarded it as ineffectual and unconstitutional. Cardinal Castracane himself, perceiving that it was a radical error, dared not publish the *Motu proprio*. Sturbinetti, President of the Council of Deputies, pointed out the futility of the act. "You see here," said he, "a plot laid to make us fall into a state of anarchy, to serve as a pretext for seeking the intervention of a foreign power." The Chambers, after declaring the Act to be null and void, sent a deputation of five to the Pope to invite the Pontiff to return to Rome. At the Neapolitan frontier the deputies were stopped; they then sent a letter to Gaeta, but the reply was that the Pope could not receive them. Upon this the Roman Chamber, seeing their deputation so badly treated, set the Pope aside and went on their own way. Thus things strayed farther and farther out of their lawful course, which was just what Antonelli desired in order to produce utter ruin.

Time was passing, and Pius IX. no longer thought of leaving Gaeta; public affairs were becoming worse, and

foreign intervention was beginning to be talked of. To Rosmini this seemed disastrous, and he endeavoured to persuade the Holy Father to go to Benevento, a city still faithful to him; there he could raise troops of his own before calling in foreign assistance, which would provoke the Italians. He could there assume his position as a Constitutional Prince, and address some kindly words to his subjects. These and other suggestions he made to the Holy Father in word and also in writing, so that he might ponder them at leisure. A moment there was when the Pope seemed inclined to follow this advice; towards the middle of December he sent for Rosmini and showed him the draft of a manifesto to his subjects, and as he did not quite like it, he asked him to draw up another. Rosmini obeyed without delay, though he expected that it would be scattered to the winds as soon as Antonelli came on the scene.

Many were of opinion that Father Rosmini, being near the Pope, had great influence with him; but in reality his advice was always counteracted by the crafty Cardinal on whom the Pope implicitly relied. Many distinguished persons had recourse to Rosmini, entreating him to urge the Sovereign Pontiff to adopt a conciliatory policy; amongst these were the Marchese Bevilaqua of Bologna, and the Marchese Ricci of Macerata, both devoted to Pius IX., who had named them members of the Commission mentioned above. Charles Albert also sent Mgr. Riccardi, Bishop of Savona, and the Marchese Cordero of Montezemolo as envoys to Pius IX. to offer him hospitality; Rosmini seconded them, desiring to induce the Pontiff to quit that ill-omened spot. France in its turn looked with a jealous eye on the close friendship between the Pontifical Court and the Austrian Government; and the Ambassador, the Duc d'Harcourt, noting the apparent distrust of France, complained to the Holy Father, expressing his fear that the Pope meant to recall the liberties already conceded. His Holiness more than once sent word to the Duke by Rosmini that he would never withdraw the liberties he

had conceded, at the same time urging France to be generous with the Holy See. But Rosmini's good offices were constantly rendered unavailing by Antonelli, whose influence over the Pope's mind was unlimited; so that finding he could be of no service to the Pontiff, and only gave umbrage to the courtiers, who wanted to have everything their own way, he resolved to withdraw as soon as possible, and seek some place where he could breathe more freely.

Here we must retrace our steps a little to speak of a storm which had been brewing for some time. At the first mention of his promotion to the Cardinalate, Rosmini's adversaries were overwhelmed and terrified beyond measure, and it would be hard to describe the efforts they made to prevent it; some paid court to him so as to catch him in some snare, others strove to find matter for censure in his works, others tried to induce eminent personages to accuse him to the Holy Father. Pius IX. himself told Father Rosmini of these accusations, and added with a smile, and a significant gesture, "Your enemies can see just as far as this; still as 'we are debtors to the wise and to the unwise,' you would oblige me by writing a letter which I could publish." Rosmini answered that he would willingly write it, if he had a hint as to its tenor, to which the Pope replied that he would send Mgr. Corboli to him, and they could come to an understanding about it. A few days later Mgr. Corboli came, and in the most friendly way informed him that his adversaries had presented two lists of propositions censured by them, but that the Pope, rejecting one list altogether, wished him to explain only five points. On hearing this, he asked Mgr. Corboli, as he knew the Pope's mind, to prepare a draft of the letter to the Holy Father, which he accordingly undertook to do.

Nevertheless, the Pope's affectionate esteem and goodwill remained unchanged, as he showed by many unmistakable proofs. In the very weighty matter of the expediency of a dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception, Pius IX. desired Rosmini to add his vote to those of

eighteen eminent theologians, and was guided by his, even where it differed from all the others. He told him that he intended to promote him to the Cardinalate in the December Consistory, and wishing to lessen his expenses, desired Castracane to inform him that apartments would be assigned him in a religious house in Rome; indeed he was willing to advance him 10,000 scudi, but Rosmini, well aware of the Pope's straitened circumstances, did not avail himself of the offer. However, at the instance of his friends, who reminded him that December was near, he reluctantly purchased carriages and horses, plate for the altar, and other requisites for a Cardinal to the extent of about 9,000 scudi. Then followed the stormy days of November, which turned all thoughts into other channels; but Rosmini, who was anxious to clear himself of the false accusations, wrote repeatedly to Mgr. Corboli for the promised letter. At last it came about the middle of December; Rosmini transcribed it and took it to Pius IX., who received it graciously, saying that he would read it. It explained his doctrines, and dispersed the clouds which his enemies had tried to cast over them, and concluded by expressing his warm attachment, together with his complete submission and obedience to the Vicar of Christ. One of the accusations he refutes in this letter is that he favoured the use of the vulgar tongue in the Liturgy of the Church; he also explains his meaning as to the election of Bishops by clergy and people, and utterly repudiates the statement that he wished for the separation of Church and State.

A few days later he went to see the Pope, who said that from a glance at the letter, it seemed to him the statement about the election of Bishops was scarcely clear enough. Rosmini replied that he had faithfully transcribed Mgr. Corboli's letter; he begged the Holy Father to point out the changes required in his letter, as his sole desire was to be in conformity with the sentiments of the Church and of the Pope, or of any one who might by command of His Holiness direct him what to do. In his next audience

Father Rosmini read to the Pope the article on the elections from Mgr. Corboli's draft letter which he had brought with him; the Holy Father coloured up, seemed much embarrassed, and said that he had not yet been able to examine the matter well. Rosmini begged him to do so, and then let him know his revered decision.

As time went on the Pontifical Court grew cooler and more discourteous towards Rosmini, and at times even contemptuous, without his being able to divine the cause. At Gaeta and elsewhere a report was spread that he would not now be raised to the purple, and that the Pope was in a dilemma between the promise formerly made and the voice of conscience. This rumour much displeased the Pope, who told him to take no notice of it, for he was fixed in his resolve. On the 8th of January 1849, Rosmini went to Mola, a milder climate, on account of a troublesome cough from which he suffered, and, still more perhaps, to remove all pretexts from the suspicious courtiers. He continued to pay frequent visits to the Holy Father, and was always received most graciously. Finding that the atmosphere of the Court grew more and more oppressive, he asked the Pope's leave to go to Naples for the printing of some little spiritual works, *Operette Spirituali*, he had put together in odd moments. They were produced in two parts. Part I. contains the *Catechism according to the order of Ideas*, the *Maxims of Christian Perfection*, and the *Spirit of the Institute of Charity*. The second contains a *Method of hearing Holy Mass*, *An Italian Translation of some of the Psalms, with notes*, and *A Commentary on the Magnificat*.[1] At Naples he was hospitably received at the Vergini by the Vincentian Fathers, thanks to his faithful friend Cardinal Ostini, who was residing there, and who died there shortly after. Here he also made the acquaintance of a young priest, D. Gustavo d'Hohenlohe, afterwards Cardinal, who conceived a profound veneration for him, and retained it

[1] *Operette Spirituali*, published by Batelli at Naples, 1849, and at Intra, by Bertolotti, 1871.

till the day of his death. Amongst these poor religious Rosmini felt quite at home, and resumed his life of prayer and study; but as soon as his presence became known, numbers of people called upon him, some to consult him on scientific questions, some through mere curiosity, and many, it is to be feared, with less upright intentions. Certain it is that amongst the visitors who pretended to kiss his hand, some showed their teeth before long. He was affable to all, welcomed some, tolerated others, but showed neither eagerness to receive visitors, nor annoyance at their calls.

The Pontifical Court at Gaeta and the Neapolitan police grew stiffer, and either banished the devoted friends of the Pope, or made things very unpleasant for them. Amongst these were Montanari and the aged Polish General Szymatowscki. Mgr. Stella, the Pope's confessor—a pious man after his own fashion, very eccentric in his behaviour, and a capital tool in the hands of Antonelli—inveighed loudly against Rosmini, saying that he would never have believed him such a consummate hypocrite, that he was a communist, a real plague to the Church, that in his works the name of Jesus Christ was never to be found, and so on; he, moreover, strictly forbade his penitent, the Baroness Koenneritz, to read his works. Although the calumniators were beginning to make some impression on the mind of Pius IX., he still continued very gracious to Rosmini, eagerly asked for news of him, and showed a wish that he should publish something against the errors of the day, which he did by bringing out the *Essay on Communism and Socialism*. His Holiness was still determined to make him a Cardinal, and reproved Mgr. Stella for forbidding the Baroness Koenneritz to read Rosmini's works, at the same time releasing her from the prohibition.

Rosmini was not ignorant of what was being done to his prejudice at Gaeta, but bore it all in silence, and was awaiting the Holy Father's instructions about the revision of the letter we have mentioned above, when about the be-

ginning of February Father Spaccapietra, Superior of the house of Vergini, came to tell him in the Pope's name that he was to set about correcting the letter, especially on the point of episcopal elections. This seemed strange to Rosmini, because it was not in accordance with the arrangement the Pope had made with him. However, he answered that as it was the Pope's desire, he would set to work at once. On the 10th of February he wrote a very humble letter to the Holy Father, in which, seeking to guess the mind of His Holiness, he recast the paragraph on episcopal elections, and begged that, if he had not caught his meaning, the Pope would himself deign to dictate the right form of expression. He confided the letter to the Papal Nuncio at Naples, who was anything but courteous, and no one could ever ascertain whether it had been delivered.

It is clear that the party adverse to Rosmini was gaining ground. In Rome and elsewhere, in conversation, and in the press, it was reported that he had gone to Rome to seek for the Cardinalate; that the Cardinals had protested against his nomination; that the horrible doctrines contained especially in the *Plan of a Constitution* and the *Five Wounds* had shown what kind of man he was. At the same time Theiner issued his *Letters* against the *Five Wounds*, making innumerable doctrinal and historical mistakes, besides false statements and calumnies; and as fast as they came out the zealots translated these from German into Italian, and took them to Pius IX. Father Spina, too, wrote against the *Five Wounds*, and the very title of his book, *Parricide attempted by the Abate Rosmini*, is a positive proof of the bitterness of the writer. The King of Naples was by no means well-disposed towards him, either because he favoured Liberal institutions, or because he had not paid him court at Gaeta; therefore to escape annoyance from the police, who watched his every movement and shadowed every one who came to see him, he took up his abode on the 13th of March at the Capuchin Monastery of St. Ephrem. Here he lived among the poor sons of St.

Francis as if he had been one of them, and occupied a cell pitifully poor and mean, in which he was happier than a king in his royal palace. One day Vito Fornari took two gentlemen to see him, and there was not even a seat apiece for the company; another day Signor Gigante, a lawyer, called upon him, and noticing the coarse, common bed-covering, wanted to provide him with something better, but he refused, saying, "Thanks, my dear friend, thanks, but I am quite satisfied with what they have given me. I am not one of those who cannot pray without a down cushion to kneel upon." Yet at this time his health was very bad; he was sometimes too ill to celebrate Mass, and was even obliged to get some one to write his letters for him. As soon as he was convalescent, he wrote to his brother, "I am living peacefully with these good Capuchin Fathers in a beautiful situation facing the sea, and the air is excellent because the Monastery stands on a height. I have all that is needful, and desire nothing more."

From his new abode he wrote his Easter greetings to the Holy Father; and in his reply the Pope said, "We exhort you to reflect on the works you have printed, to modify, or correct, or retract; we have charged Cardinal Mai to examine them." It is easy to conceive the astonishment and sorrow that these words must have caused Father Rosmini. After faithfully transcribing like a pupil at Mgr. Corboli's dictation, out of veneration for the Papal authority; after entreating the Pope, and entreating him again, to suggest the expressions that would be most acceptable to him; here he finds himself called upon to *modify*, *correct*, or *retract;* he is not told what, and there he is left completely in the dark! Evidently the mind of Pius IX. was changed; Rosmini's adversaries were masters of the field, and God alone knows what they had whispered into the ear of the good Pope. Afflicted but not disturbed, the holy man took up his pen and wrote once more to the Supreme Pontiff, stating that his only desire was to know what he must modify, correct, or retract, in order to do so at once;

that he would await this information from Cardinal Mai, and was ready to put his signature blindly to the doctrine of the Church propounded by the Cardinal, and that he would gladly condemn the contrary. In conclusion he said, "I should like the whole world to know that I adhere to the authority of the Church alone, that I delight in the truth she teaches me, and glory in retracting the errors I may have fallen into against her infallible decisions." This letter too was sent to the office of the Nuncio at Naples, and it was never known whether it was forwarded; probably it never was.

A few days later Cardinal Mai appeared at Naples; Rosmini called on him to ascertain the wishes of the Sovereign Pontiff, but the Cardinal hastened to say that he had declined the commission because it was distasteful and beyond his powers, as there was question of examining upwards of thirty volumes on subjects with which he was not familiar. Rosmini was quite at a loss; however, the Cardinal's reply left no doubt that an examination of all his works was now proposed. This was greater and more painful darkness, and being wounded in so secret a way he could not parry the attack directed, as he believed, less against himself than against the Institute. To add to his sorrow there was the hourly-increasing distrust and suspicion on the part of the police, of the Court, of the Nunciature, and even of the Capuchins at St. Ephrem's, who, fearing molestation themselves, began to make things uncomfortable, so that he might depart of his own accord. All this time the undisturbed peace of his soul was so evident in the serenity of his countenance, in his tone of voice, in his smile, that hardly a trace of suffering could be perceived. "I never saw him disturbed," said Vito Fornari, an eye-witness; "he was never downcast, nor did he ever give a sign or hint of the trials he was enduring at the time. That sweet smile of his revealed a profound peace, great modesty, perfect interior harmony, constant self-possession, or rather the constant reign of divine grace

in his soul." But a still nobler testimony of the sublime peace of his soul is given in the pages of his commentary on St. John's Gospel, penned in those days. Men persecute him, and he flies from men to soar on eagles' wings to the heights of loving speculation, there to meditate on the secrets of life divine.

The printing of the *Operette Spirituali* was delayed, by the intrigues of malicious persons, it would seem, until the end of June. On the 9th of that month he went to Gaeta to present a copy of the work to the Holy Father, together with the *Letters on Episcopal Elections* recently reprinted. He was not aware that an extraordinary meeting of the Congregation of the Index, convened at Naples under the presidency of Cardinal Brignole, had on 30th May decreed the prohibition of the *Five Wounds* and *Constitution*. Directly Pius IX. saw him, he exclaimed, "Dear Abate, we are no longer constitutionalists." Rosmini, who had heard him say a few months before that he would refuse to withdraw the Constitution, even if he had to oppose the unanimous vote of the Cardinals, answered with respectful frankness, "Your Holiness, it is a serious matter to change the course you have entered upon and split your pontificate into two portions. I am also of the opinion that the Constitution cannot be restored all at once; but to let the people retain some hope of its ultimate restoration would have a good effect, for it is dangerous for a prince to move in two opposite directions." After a little more conversation on the same topic, Father Rosmini told the Pope about his conversation with Cardinal Mai, and His Holiness seemed displeased that the Cardinal had declined the charge. About the two prohibited works, however, he said not a word, but expressed himself pleased that in the *Letters on Episcopal Elections* the use of the vulgar tongue in the Liturgy is disapproved of. He spoke of the little works presented to him as being free from errors, "because," said he, "*one passage explains another*." Father Rosmini quitted the audience with the conviction that there was no longer

any intention of having his works examined, while, in reality, the decree of prohibition had been signed by Pius IX. three days before; unless we suppose the decree had been dated before the Pope's signature was obtained.

After this audience he stayed at Gaeta as guest of Canon Orgera. On the 11th he was suddenly waited on by a commissary of police and a companion, who, in the name of Major Youngh, demanded his passport; having got it they went off. One of them returned towards evening to inform him that he must leave Gaeta because his passport had not been signed at Naples. Rosmini, who saw through the trick, drew himself up and answered that he was at Gaeta by the Pope's desire, and would not leave without his consent. This resolute speech sent his visitor off. About eleven o'clock at night both officers returned. Rosmini, who was retiring to rest, begged them to come next day, but they demanded admittance, and there were gendarmes outside in reserve if necessary. On entering they informed him that he must leave early next morning; but he, inflexible, made the same reply as before—that by forcing him to depart they affronted the Holy Father, which certainly could not be the King's intention, and that he should yield only to force. Unused to such dignified resistance, the police, after a good deal of talk, left him in peace; however, one of them, before going, plainly told the people of the house that it was an intrigue of Antonelli's.

That night Rosmini never closed his eyes; in the morning he celebrated Holy Mass and invoked the help of God, and then set out for the Palace, fully expecting to have his audience with the Pope contested. After he had passed the first guard, he met a servant, who called out haughtily, "There are orders to admit no one." He asked for Antonelli; the answer was, "He is engaged." In answer to an inquiry for one of the other Monsignori, he was told that none were there. He decided to wait, when Antonelli opened a door, glanced round, and suddenly drew back again, when Father Rosmini, giving him no time, said, "You

are just the person I want, your Eminence; I have some urgent business with you." The Cardinal could not escape, so he admitted him. Having heard what had happened on the previous day, he denied any knowledge of the matter, said that the police had their own regulations, that a brother-in-law of his had been driven from Naples—it was his own doing, however—and that they were within their rights. Rosmini replied that he would have gone without difficulty, only that he felt it his duty to have his orders from the Pope, by whose desire he had come to Gaeta, as the Cardinal well knew. Antonelli demurred about introducing him, but as Rosmini met his objections by saying he should consider it an atrocious insult to be denied an audience with the Pope, Antonelli yielded, overawed by the firmness which had cowed the King's carabineers. The Cardinal went in first himself; after a good half-hour out came Major Youngh, who had doubtless been admitted by some other entrance; Antonelli followed, and then Rosmini entered. "I have only just heard," said Pius IX., "what took place yesterday; I have told Youngh to leave you in peace, and that I would tell you to go at your convenience in two or three days." He added that the suspicions of the police had been aroused by the number of persons who called to see him, and explained that he felt obliged to condescend to them as he was not in his own house. Rosmini pointed out to His Holiness the meanness of such a pretext, and told him of the artifices used by the police and the Pontifical Court to prevent his access, and spoke of the irreverence shown in this way to the august person of the Sovereign Pontiff. The Pope answered, "They fear your influence over me." Rosmini then remarked that he could scarcely be ready to depart in two or three days, as his health would not allow him to travel by land or in a small steamer, and the Pope replied that he might wait as long as might be convenient; he should not be molested again.

A couple of days later, when he came for another audi-

ence, he encountered Major Youngh in the ante-chamber. The latter was at first surly, and blamed him for not having left Gaeta on his intimation, but little by little he assumed a milder tone, and acknowledged that the affair of the passport was only a pretext to remove him from Gaeta, but that the real reasons he could not disclose.

When Rosmini went in to see the Pope, he complained that the motives of the insolent treatment he had received were kept secret. "Ah! if you only knew," said Pius IX., "all they have told me about you! But I do not want it to be talked about." He added immediately, "Now they are examining your works." These words Rosmini connected with the preceding conversation, and thinking the police had undertaken to examine his political works, he said with a smile, "Let them examine, they will find nothing." Later on, it occurred to him that this remark must have referred to the ecclesiastical examination of the two small books mentioned above; but as the decree of prohibition bears the Pope's approval signed on the 6th of June, the Holy Father's words cannot be explained, except on the supposition that it was ante-dated. Finally, Rosmini asked directions as to where he should go; the Pope left this point undecided, saying he would think it over, and Rosmini should do the same.

This conversation, as well as the previous ones, left no room for doubt that Pius IX. had changed, both in his political opinions and in the affectionate esteem he had in the past entertained for Father Rosmini. But the good Father was not disturbed; he wrote in his diary, as he was accustomed to do in adverse events, *Deo Gratias!* At the same time, desiring to enlighten the Holy Father as to the wiles and intrigues of those about him, and to preserve his own good name and that of the Institute, he asked leave to write a memorial in explanation of facts and in justification of his own actions and intentions. He presented it to the Sovereign Pontiff on the 16th of June, and although he knew it would be seen by Antonelli he would not conceal

the truth from the Holy Father. Two days later he received a letter from Mgr. Stella, purporting to be an answer, though in reality it answered nothing. In a style, half friendly and half sarcastic, the Monsignore informed Father Rosmini that the Pope had left him free to choose his place of residence, and prayed God to enlighten him, that he might see what was displeasing to the Divine Majesty in his writings, which he could easily ascertain by submitting to the judgment of the Holy See. The letter said, indeed, that the Holy Father would be with him in paternal affection, but we shall soon see what token of paternal affection was sent after this faithful son, who through love for the Church and the Holy Father had left the persons and things he held most dear, and sacrificed money, time, peace of mind, and honour, and had even staked his life. Some years later—September 13, 1853—Father Bertetti wrote that Mgr. Stella confessed that the veil had fallen from his eyes, and that he could not have believed Father Rosmini's enemies were such as he had since discovered them to be.

Father Rosmini, suppressing his grief, replied humbly and quietly to Mgr. Stella's letter that for the present he should retire to Capua, and added these words, which prove the equanimity of his soul in the vicissitudes of life: "I have the greatest confidence that, if I have, without being aware of it, written anything erroneous or pernicious in any of my works, God will in His mercy be indulgent towards me, for I have sought nothing in all my poor labours but His Glory, the good of the Church, and the good of souls; and it is God Himself who out of His pure goodness has infused this feeling into me. Any decision whatever that may emanate from the Holy See I shall accept with all my heart, and joyfully submit, seeking to uphold, not my own opinions, but the doctrine of my mistress, the Holy Roman Church: this, too, I hope to do by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

He left Gaeta on the 19th of June, and the same evening arrived at Capua. The Archbishop of Capua, Serra Cassano,

who was at his country-house, hastened home, and he, with his clergy, received Father Rosmini with the most cordial and reverent welcome, which, by its warmth, made some amends for the icy coldness that had surrounded him for some time past. On the 21st he went on to Caserta, where he intended to stay at the Monastery of St. Lucia de' Riformati until the political situation developed. A week had hardly passed when the police were again on his track, and intimated that he must leave the kingdom within eight days; four days later the order was countermanded, and he was told he might stay. He replied that he had now arranged to go: the official who had brought him the news rejoined, "The permission is for you to stay, not to go," adding, "You need not put yourself about—this is an intrigue of some red hat." On the 15th of July he returned to Capua, and was received at the Seminary "with the kind of welcome that comforts the exiled and the persecuted," as he wrote in his Diary. Next day he visited Monte Cassino, where St. Benedict wrote his wonderful Rule, and where his relics repose—that great Saint whose spirit is so apparent in Father Rosmini's Rule and asceticism. Two days he spent there in delightful peace, refreshing his spirit after its recent wounds, and preparing it for fresh sorrows by the remembrance of those *giants*, as he called them, who had made this spot so venerable. When he had examined the precious autographs of Alexander III., Hildebrand, Peter Damian, and Innocent III., he gave vent to his emotions in these words written at the time: "Ah! may God rekindle, pour out, and intensify the spirit of these magnanimous reformers and defenders of His Church on this cold and decrepit century of ours!" From Monte Cassino he went on to Albano, where he stayed at an hotel. Hearing that Cardinal Tosti was staying in the neighbourhood, he called upon him, and received a pressing invitation to remain with him, which he accepted, receiving every proof of sincere affection and exquisite courtesy from the Cardinal for more than two months.

Whilst here he undertook, at the Cardinal's instance, to write his long *Answer to Agostino Theiner*,[1] who had written against the *Five Wounds*. He had almost finished the work when, on the 15th of August, Father Boeri, the Dominican, arrived and asked for him. He was, as usual, at the Library of the Seminary, and Father Boeri, after spending half-an-hour with him, came out exclaiming, "Here is another Fénélon!" He had brought Father Rosmini a letter from Father Buttaoni, Master of the Sacred Palace, informing him of the decree of the Index prohibiting the *Five Wounds* and the *Constitution*, and asking if he would submit. Rosmini took up his pen at once and wrote on the spot, "With the sentiments of a most devoted and obedient son of the Holy See, which by the grace of God I have always been from my heart and have openly declared myself, I hereby state that I submit to the prohibition purely and simply and in the fullest manner possible, and beg you to assure our most Holy Father and the Sacred Congregation of this." One only request he made most humbly; it was, that the author's name might not be published in the decree, as the works had been printed anonymously: this modest entreaty, made lest the Institute should suffer, was not attended to.

The event, unexpected as it was, seemed like a flash of light on a dark night, and exposed in an instant the plot secretly laid against him at Rome, Gaeta, and Naples; he also knew now that the question of his Cardinalate was at an end, and, except for Cardinal Castracane's persuasion, he would at once have disposed of all that he had purchased, to the value of about 40,000 scudi. One thing alone was still a mystery to him, and that was the affectionate reception accorded him by Pius IX. at Gaeta, in striking contrast with his action. Rosmini suspected some calumny, but his conscience reproached him with nothing. A gleam of light was shed on the matter when, some time after, Mgr. Charvas informed him that the Holy

[1] *Risposta al P. Theiner*, published Casale, 1850.

Father exceedingly regretted that he had not by some explanation forestalled the prohibition of the two works. At first Rosmini could not understand this remark. Had he not put himself entirely into the Holy Father's hands? Had he not repeatedly begged that the words should be dictated to him, and promised to transcribe them faithfully? Soon after, however, remembering that no answer had ever been returned to his two letters to the Pope, which had been sent through the Nuncio at Naples, he concluded that they had been lost, or, more probably, had been intercepted by his adversaries.

Whatever may have been the case, these repeated trials must have been permitted by God for His own wise and loving ends: they certainly served to give this great soul a finer mettle, and to make its exalted virtue more conspicuous. Here are some passages from his letters which reflect the peace and joyful serenity of the writer. "The unlooked-for event," he wrote to Barola, "in no way disturbed the peace and gladness of my soul; indeed it called forth sincere expressions of thanksgiving and praise to that Divine Providence which disposes all things in love, and has permitted this, too, through love alone." To Father Molinari he wrote, "You must not be afflicted at the prohibition of my little works, because we are to grieve about nothing but sin. They were written with an upright intention; of that my conscience bears witness. If I have been compelled to accept the Cardinalate and go to great expense, and if now, as I believe, the Pope will not confer the dignity on me, all this is really nothing, because it does us no harm, and may indeed assist us to obtain our end. Let us then continue calm and joyful, if we chance to be humbled and to suffer something in imitation of Jesus Christ." To Parma he wrote on the 14th September 1849, "I know by reason and by faith, and I feel this in the depths of my soul, that everything which is willed or permitted by God is done by eternal, infinite, essential love. And who can be angry with love?" To Fradelizio he writes, "God has willed it thus. *Sit nomen Domini bene-*

dictum! I am content with it, because I wish for nothing but the will of God." On the 9th of October he wrote to Father Paoli, "Let us leave God to do as He wills, my dearest brother, and for our part let us think only of doing our duty, endeavouring with the Divine assistance to fulfil all justice. Even this trial must be, in the grand plan of Divine wisdom, one of the means for promoting the kingdom of God and the glory of Christ: let us, who wish for nothing else, rejoice thereat."

External consolations were not wanting to him. Pius IX. declared himself satisfied with his prompt and humble submission; Cardinal Franzoni termed it a salutary and illustrious example of edifying submission; the Master of the Sacred Palace spoke of it as the noblest and most solemn testimony that a man of such virtue and merit could give of his devotion to the Chair of Peter; others, the Marquis Cavour among the number, taking everything into consideration, saw in this act something of heroism. Rosmini feared that this prohibition would come as a shock to the Institute, but he was quite reassured, for his sons, as if to console him, gathered round him more closely. Only one, a priest, a pious man but rather whimsical, who was already wavering in his vocation, gave way and fell, though he deeply regretted it later on; but his fall was abundantly compensated for by the reception into the Institute of several excellent priests, amongst whom we must mention De-Vit, Gastaldi, and Cappa, Canons respectively of Rovigo, Turin, and Saluzzo, the last of the three being drawn to the Institute by the humble submission of the Christian philosopher to the Chair of Peter.

Rosmini's act, which appeared so noble and beautiful in the eyes of good men, was displeasing to others, and, according as passion coloured their judgment, some thought his submission excessive and unbecoming, and blamed the Index and its decree; others considered it defective and insufficient, and blamed Father Rosmini for not retracting or condemning his works. The former, who attacked the

Sacred Congregation, were answered by him in a protest in the *Armonia;* to the latter, who sought to defame him, he made no reply. On this point we find a reference in his letter to Bertolozzi: "With reference to the two little works, I made no retractation because I was simply asked to submit; and because, when I offered to make any retractation whatever, it was considered unnecessary."

On October 8, 1849, he left the delightful retirement of Albano for Rome, and on his way visited his faithful friend Castracane, at Palestrina, where he stayed two days. The visible emotion with which the Cardinal took leave of him showed the sincere love he bore him, and how deeply he was touched by his afflictions. At Rome he found that his goods, as if by miracle, had escaped from the spoliation of the Republican Government; so after a few days spent in making some arrangements he set out for Stresa. "I thank God," he wrote to the Baroness Koenneritz in the course of his journey, "that I can retire again to the solitude of my religious home. The world calls this disgrace: I have never returned from Rome so joyful as I now am. I have acted according to my conscience, and our Lord has rewarded me by withdrawing me from pressing dangers and from a grave responsibility that might have been fatal to my soul." Professor Giorgini, Manzoni's son-in-law, with whom he stayed a couple of days, thus describes him: "Rosmini returned from Gaeta like a commander who has lost the battle, but is conscious of having done his duty and fought in a good cause. His words about the Pope were full of reverence and affection; and his judgment of the persons then in power at Court was temperate and kind. He came back without any bitterness, like a man who, in the failure of his plans, adores the will of God, instead of attributing it to the ill-will of men; he returned without regret, like a man who sought nothing for himself, and felt that, in whatever position God might place him, it would always be possible to serve Him, and who was ready to serve Him as joyfully in the peace of the

cloister as amid the agitation of public life." From Genoa on October 28th he wrote letters of heartfelt gratitude to Cardinals Castracane and Tosti. The latter, writing to Father Bertetti on the 10th of February 1856, after Rosmini's death, says, "The hospitality I afforded him (at Albano) earned me the brightest days of my life, on account of the edification I received from his heroic virtue and the wisdom he seemed to infuse into others with a simplicity and charm which reminded us of Origen in his palmy days." At Lesa, where Manzoni was then staying, he stopped awhile to give his first greetings to his beloved friend, and on the evening of the 2nd of November 1849 he ascended the hill of Stresa, where his dear sons were awaiting him. Little more than a year had passed since, with trembling hopes, they had watched him depart; now they saw him return, his hopes vanished, rejected by the world. His hair was nearly white, witness to the anguish he had endured, but in his calm, sweet expression, and the serene expanse of his noble brow, there still shone the peace and joy of his soul. Arrived at home, he embraced his sons, and they at once repaired to the Church to thank God in a *Te Deum* for having freed him from the entanglement of politics, the jealousy of the Court, and the burden of the Cardinalate. It was a fortunate disgrace for one who had only resigned himself to the purple through obedience; fortunate also for us, for to it we owe several of his noblest philosophical works. But it was a real misfortune for the Sacred College, which it deprived of a man who would have been one of its greatest ornaments; an irreparable loss was it to Pius IX. thus to part with the man, perhaps the only one of his times, whose sound judgment might have saved the Pontifical throne from the ruin into which Antonelli's policy hurried it.

Five months later Pius IX. made his entry into Rome. He returned as an absolute prince, escorted by foreign troops; but though he reassumed the reins of government, he never regained entirely the affection of the Italian people.

For the moment Antonelli's policy seemed victorious, but the triumph was of short duration. Ten years passed, and several provinces withdrew from their allegiance to place themselves under the dominion of Charles Albert's son; ten years more and the Piedmontese army deprived the Pope of the rest of his States, and even of Rome itself; such was the consequence of the policy of Gaeta, as Rosmini had foretold. What must have been Antonelli's thoughts when he saw the overthrow of the Pontifical throne in spite of his vain efforts to restore it, and recalled the prophetic utterances of the wise Roveretan whom he had repaid with persecution! What must have been the reflections of the good Pope when, amongst the pilgrims bringing their offerings to the Prisoner of the Vatican, Rosmini's sons appeared, bearing the silver church plate prepared by their Father for the Cardinalate? And what were the feelings of Pio Nono when, later on, he saw Antonelli carried to the grave, mourned by none, his memory disgraced and his estate disputed in the courts of justice?

Truly, history is a great teacher.

CHAPTER XXV

FATHER ROSMINI AT STRESA—VICISSITUDES OF THE INSTITUTE—HIS WORKS (1849–1854)

Once more at Stresa amongst those so dear to him, who gathered round him with the tenderest affection, and to whom he could speak freely, Rosmini soon recovered from the effects of the sad days he had passed amongst heartless and faithless men, so often to be met with in courts. The wrongs he had endured, the ingratitude of those whom he had assisted, the desertion of false or half-hearted friends, seemed to be entirely forgotten by him, nor would he suffer others to recall them. He wrote, indeed, the *Commentary on the Mission to Rome*,[1] so that, when minds were once more tranquil, truth might have its due; but for the present, out of delicacy of feeling, he kept it private even from his own household, so that it was only given by them to the public twenty-five years after his death, to clear their Father's memory from fresh insults as well as from those of earlier date. Happy in his solitude, which, like St. Jerome, he called the "abode of angels," he thanked God that he could now devote himself more exclusively to his Institute and to the studies, to which he felt impelled by the speed of fleeting years and the abundance of the ideas which crowded into his mind, to express which "a hundred years of life," he said, "would be too short." Since the writing of his works and the care of the Institute were the two principal duties of charity to which he was called by Providence, he hoped, by devoting himself to them, to become more intimately united to God, and to repose in Him as the end of

[1] *Missione di A. Rosmini alla Corte di Roma*, 1848–49, published by Paravia, Rome, 1881.

all his actions and the supreme need of his soul. "Two things alone give me comfort and peace," he wrote to one of his spiritual sons, "the solitude of the heart in which we find God, and the charitable works annexed to our office in which we find God. God alone is our all." Let us turn first to the vicissitudes of the Institute and his efforts on its behalf.

We have seen how the house at Verona was at last happily opened, and how it might soon have been firmly established, but for the death of Father Boselli, who was cut down in the prime of life on the 24th of September 1848. The good Father, who thus early exchanged earth for heaven, was sincerely mourned by the people of Verona, and Rosmini deeply lamented the loss of this son, one of his first companions, recommended to him by the Marchesa Canossa in 1826. Writing to Father Molinari on the 23rd of September 1848, Father Rosmini says that he always looked on Boselli with veneration, and felt a holy envy of his sanctity; he mentions with admiration his humility, uprightness, charity, and patience, and that spiritual enlightenment coming from above which is the secret of the saints. Soon after the death of Father Boselli, our Lord called to Himself Father Robert Setti, who, after suffering for some years from an insidious disease, died at Rovereto in the thirty-ninth year of his age. At the loss of these two beloved companions, Father Molinari became much depressed, and would have altogether lost heart but for the assistance of his loving Superior, who hastened to infuse into him by his letters that vigorous faith which was the life of his own soul. No sooner was Father Molinari's courage restored, than Father Mazzi began to waver in his vocation. He was a good, pious priest, but his piety was of that short-sighted kind which mistakes the delusions of the imagination for heavenly illuminations. For some time he had been disquieted, and there were certain persons ready to increase his disturbance of mind; therefore, as soon as he heard of the prohibition of Father Rosmini's

two works, he made up his mind to leave the Institute, nor had the affectionate charity of his Father power to retain him. Unfortunately for him, the adversaries of the Institute at Rome were ready enough to urge him on; and these persons, instead of helping to put him on the right path, undertook to get him released from his vows without consulting Father Rosmini, though courtesy and equity and, indeed, strict justice required that he should be appealed to. Father Rosmini was silent under this affront, but when Mazzi began boldly to put forward unfounded claims to money, &c., he at last stated his case clearly to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, and obtained a decision in his favour.

So much for trials within. A severe trial from without came to work the ruin of the house, not yet firmly established, and it was finally given up. Father Rosmini was viewed with disfavour by the Austrian Government for having accepted a diplomatic mission from the Piedmontese Government, and for having clearly displayed Italian sympathies; also for having written the *Five Wounds*, which looked very much like a treatise against the imperial laws, and for having advocated Italian unity in his *Constitution*. It followed as a matter of course that Bishop Mutti, a Government nominee, urged by the reports of prejudiced persons, should look on him with distrust. And so it came about that on the 26th of October 1849 the Imperial Commissary, Montecuccoli, decreed the immediate dissolution of the house at Verona and the departure of all foreign religious within a month. The news came upon Father Rosmini like a thunder-clap on a clear day; still, feeling sure that the house had been opened by the dispensation of Providence, he considered it a duty to defend it with all his might. He wrote to Mgr. Cappellari, Bishop of Vicenza, his old professor at Padua; he also wrote to Cardinal Castracane and to Bishop Mutti himself, whilst Father Molinari went to Montecuccoli and then to Radetzki, who happened to be at Verona at the time, to get the

decree annulled. Mgr. Cappellari did his utmost in the matter; Cardinal Castracane was powerless, for he had been calumniated to Pope Pius IX.; Bishop Mutti coldly shrugged his shoulders; Montecuccoli and Radetzki only made fair speeches. So, between hope and fear, the Fathers lived on for about a year, doing all the good they could. "If God wishes us to remain there," Rosmini wrote to Father Molinari with his usual calmness, "He knows how to bring it about; if He does not will it, neither do we." It was not God's will; in October 1850 came the order to depart. Father Molinari left first, and the others followed, leaving a written protest to secure the claims of the Institute. In this event Father Rosmini adored the will of God. "The Church is a vast field of labour," he wrote to a friend; "it seemed as if Providence had assigned us a portion to cultivate at Verona; if He now wishes that we should cultivate some other part, may He be blessed and eternally praised." Thus for the third time was the Institute of Charity driven from the Austrian States, leaving behind indelible traces of its charitable works. The devotedness of the people of Verona followed their benefactors, and they tried more than once to secure their return, but Rosmini's enemies were so angry and so powerful that these efforts came to naught.

The houses of the Institute in Piedmont carried on their various good works happily and prosperously. A small community continued to officiate in the Church of San Michele, and to give missions and retreats in various places throughout the diocese; another little company remained at Calvario to take care of the Sanctuary and wait for better days, since the possession was contested, as we have related in a former chapter. Stresa continued to be the novitiate house, the Central College for elementary masters, and the ordinary residence of the General and his household.

The novitiate, as we have mentioned, was increased by the admission of several distinguished men after Father Rosmini's return. One of these was Father Vincenzo de Vit,

who had been Professor in the Seminary at Padua, and afterwards Canon of the Cathedral and Librarian of the Academia dei Concordi at Rovigo. He was an erudite archæologist and philologist; author of a Latin lexicon and Onomasticon, and several minor works. Father Cappa, a doctor in theology and Canon Penitentiary of the Cathedral at Saluzzo, where he was regarded as a saint, was drawn to join the Institute about this time by observing Rosmini's submission to the Holy See. He was a man of solid virtue, thoroughly grounded in humility: and God, who exalts the humble, raised him to the office of General of the Order, the third in succession to Father Rosmini. Father Caccia, Provost of St. Satiro at Milan, and Father Gastaldi, Doctor of Divinity in the Theological College and University of Turin, were also novices at Stresa at this time. The latter, who was a Canon of the Chapter of Holy Trinity at Turin when he joined the Order, laboured several years on the English Mission, and on his return to Italy became Bishop of Saluzzo and afterwards Archbishop of Turin. He was one of the most zealous and learned defenders of the Infallibility of the Pope at the Vatican Council. Yet another of these holy men sent by Providence was Francis Cardozo Ayres, a Brazilian by birth, a gentle and holy soul, who was sent on the English Mission, and ordained priest in 1850. He laboured in this part of the vineyard of the Lord till 1868, when at the request of the Emperor of Brazil he was created Bishop of Olinda and Pernambuco in Brazil. After two years' episcopate, Mgr. Cardozo died on May 14, 1870, at Rome, whither he had gone to attend the Vatican Council.[1]

Father Rosmini lived on the hill at Stresa until November

[1] Father Cardozo, a saintly priest, was described by Father Rosmini as young in years but mature in judgment, and it was with reluctance that he parted with him at the request of Father Pagani, who spoke of him as an "angel in the flesh." He was buried in the Church of the Institute at Via Alessandrina, Rome. His body was afterwards transferred to Pernambuco by his successor in the see of Olinda in 1903, and was on that occasion discovered to be incorrupt, thirty-three years after his death.

1850 with these faithful sons, comforted by them and blessing the Providence of God. "Providence, like a tender mother," he wrote, "has so far always helped us, and, as it were, led us by the hand; and I seem to see a token of its present mercy in the progress of the novitiate, not so much as to the number of subjects, which is considerable, but because of its flourishing state with regard to religious virtue." He encouraged the faint-hearted with the words: "Fear not, little flock, . . . I have overcome the world. . . . Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." [1]

Father Paoli was the Rector of the College for Elementary Masters, and the soul of the work; under the Founder's direction he devoted himself to training masters and directing the schools entrusted to the Institute. In November 1850 a small College for boys was opened near Mme. Bolongaro's residence; the town schools, which were miserably situated, were removed to the better and healthier position of the College, and Father Rosmini's generosity provided a third master though he had only undertaken to send one.

Just at the time this College was opened, Father Rosmini, with a few of the members who formed the General's household, went to live at Mme. Bolongaro's house. We must go back a little to explain how this came about.

Mme. Bolongaro, the lady who had been instrumental in bringing the Institute and the Sisters of Providence to Stresa, died on the 8th of February 1848, and, as a public testimony of her satisfaction and gratitude, she left a small legacy to Father Rosmini, with her beautiful residence near the Lago Maggiore, the garden, and other buildings annexed. It must be noted, however, that the legacy was encumbered with conditions, whilst the temporary possession of the house and the right to the furniture were left to the lady's heir, a priest named Branzini. These legacies, coming quite unexpectedly, were rather embarrassing; to accept them involved the continuance of Mme. Bolongaro's very extensive charities, whilst to refuse them appeared dis-

[1] St. Luke xii. 32.

courteous and mean. The only course open was to dispose of the house to some pious and wealthy person, charitable enough to carry on the good works of the deceased lady. The Marchese Arconati, a nobleman likely to fulfil these requirements, made some advances, and Father Rosmini induced the heir to cede his use of the house for a compensation of two thousand francs; but when the contract was about to be drawn up the Marchese withdrew, and the house was left on Rosmini's hands, with no option except to close it or occupy it. Having consulted the Fathers, he decided to take up his abode, with the few who formed his household, in the plainer apartments of the upper floor. In this way the accommodation of the novitiate was increased, and it gained considerably by being freed from the numerous visitors who had somewhat disturbed its recollection.

Mme. Bolongaro left no near relatives, but a host of distant ones; she was not unmindful of them, and had left something to all according to their needs. However, as so often happens, the will did not answer their expectations, and it became a pretext to some for annoying Father Rosmini. A certain doctor at Stresa, a native of Lombardy, was amongst these, and he was certainly a crafty swindler. During Mme. Bolongaro's life he professed great friendship for Father Rosmini, and made a great show of piety to secure entrance to her house and obtain money as well as good dinners; but after her death he threw off the mask, and came out in his true colours. At first he tried to extort something from the heir; but seeing that the Rosminians were not disposed to support his false claims, he became furious, and began to set the people against them, and to arouse the animosity of the Government by pamphlets and newspaper articles, in which he represented them as thieves who stole the property of others, enemies of liberty, supporters of Austria, men of infamous life; finally, he threatened them with the dagger. Father Rosmini paid no attention to these charges; but

the wretched man found means to enlist the archpriest on his side, as well as the Mayor and Secretary of the Commune, and the Congregation of Charity—which, in a village, means the whole population. He found partisans, too, at Belgirate and Pallanza, and the rest followed like sheep. There had been an uproar about the Rosminians even before their Founder returned from Rome, and on his return matters became worse. At nightfall on the 6th of April, 1851, a party of roughs surrounded the house, shouting and threatening Father Rosmini and the Marchese Gustavo di Cavour, who was then staying with him. They threw stones into the porch, and did much damage to the outer wall. This disturbance went on for three hours, and though action was taken against the rioters, it dragged on so slowly that it only served to exasperate them still more.

Whilst the crowd made riot, the ringleaders secretly endeavoured to deprive the Institute of the schools by malicious accusations. A surprise visit was paid to the schools, and though nothing of any moment was found faulty, the Congregation of Charity, presided over by the archpriest, decided, contrary to the original agreement, that the Institute must give up the schools at the beginning of the New Year. This was done, and the school at Stresa was again reduced to one miserable class-room, instead of three schoolrooms in an open, healthy situation. It was indeed a sad thing to see the welfare of the village sacrificed to the whim of a minority, and charity so ill-rewarded; still more sad was it to know that the instrument and agent, the contriver, at least in part, of this injustice, was one who should have been foremost in preventing it. Father Rosmini had to endure another insult from the parish priest and churchwardens at Stresa. Mme. Bolongaro had left him the use of a tribune looking into the church, the key of which was lent to the churchwardens every year on the Feast of St. Ambrose that the faithful might place their offerings there. In 1850 the key was asked for as usual, but when it had been handed to them, the church autho-

rities rudely and haughtily refused to return it, so that Father Rosmini, having appealed in vain to the Bishop, was obliged to sue the churchwardens in the civil courts.

However, God allows men to go to a certain length and no farther. The churchwardens were ordered by the judge to return the key; the Congregation of Charity received a command from the Government to dismiss the master engaged by them, and to restore the schools to the Institute; six of the rioters were sentenced, and obtained pardon only through the good offices of Father Rosmini and Count Cavour; the doctor was deposed from the rank of Captain of the Civic Guard, and about a year later was arrested and found guilty of forgery. Thus was peace once more restored.

Neither was Domodossola without its trials. The elementary schools were flourishing under zealous masters, who also taught evening schools, and gave instructions on Sundays and holy days. The Mellerio College was prospering, and the Rosminian pupils proved the excellence of the teaching by heading the lists in public examinations at the University of Turin. Some years after Count Mellerio's death certain disputes between the heir to his estates and the town authorities at Domodossola, led to the non-payment of the legacies left for educational purposes, and proceedings had to be taken. Father Rosmini wished the schools to be carried on meanwhile, and defrayed the costs of the lawsuit, but it has been truly said that benefits beget ingratitude. Seeing that the suit was likely to be decided against him, people began to talk of getting rid of the Institute instead of in any way helping it. First of all, they depreciated the education given by religious men as unworthy of modern times; and soon, passing from words to deeds, the authorities, in May 1853, on some trifling pretence, dismissed the masters of the elementary schools. At the same time efforts were made to obtain from the Government a National College for the Ossola, that it might be on the same footing as the neighbouring provinces; and

persons interested in the project did not hesitate to issue a report, or rather an accusation which was a tissue of falsehoods, to work the downfall of the Mellerio College. Father Rosmini had no difficulty in disproving these charges, and he did so publicly in two pamphlets issued by Father Mazzotti, then Rector of the College; yet, fearing that he might be compelled sooner or later to remove his establishment, he took steps towards founding a College at Arassio. Providence disposed otherwise, for, when the vanity of the authorities had been humbled, and the excitement had subsided, the wrong done to the Institute was acknowledged; in a few years the elementary schools were restored, and the College increased and prospered.

In England, where the Institute met with less opposition, the works of charity were carried on with that buoyant energy which characterises rising institutions. The chief houses were Ratcliffe College and the missions at Rugby, Loughborough, Newport, and Cardiff. Father Pagani, the Provincial, governed them with a spirit of gentle charity under the guidance of Father Rosmini. The history of the Catholic Church in this country bears witness to the laborious efforts of the members of the Institute, and the sufferings they endured in their endeavours to dissipate the darkness of error, and to gladden so many misguided souls with the light of truth. The names of Gentili, Pagani, Signini, Rinolfi, Cavalli, Cardozo, Caccia, Gastaldi, Bertetti, Ceroni, Furlong, Hutton, Egan, Lockhart, and many others are still heard in the places where they laboured, and will long continue in grateful remembrance, like the glad songs of spring, echoing and re-echoing in the neighbouring valleys. During this period some steps were taken to establish the Institute in France at Carpentras, whither Father Belisy had gone to arrange some family affairs. At the request of certain priests a companion was sent him in the person of Father Bonnefoy, and in 1851, Father Aimo, just returned from Verona, went to join them: he was a grave, prudent, modest priest, and a very spiritual man.

They undertook, with the blessing of the Archbishop, Mgr. Dabelay, to revive good Catholic customs amongst the so-called "black penitents," to instruct soldiers in the truths of the faith, to give retreats to priests and nuns, and to teach a small private school. "Their conduct is pious, recollected, and edifying," wrote Father Nicolas, an eye-witness; "they sow in humility that they may reap in glory." Father Rosmini wrote to the little Community about this time, "Let us wait for the Lord with patience; let us neither hasten our steps through impatience or presumption, nor delay through cowardice or inactivity. If this work is to have the blessing of God, spiritual victims will be required. The undertaking will only succeed by means of prayer, charity, humility, and patience. The time when God lays the corner-stone of His temple is often hastened by the prayers and merits of good religious, never by human prudence. Prayers and pious works are the means by which God is moved."

Worldly people, however, who expected to see something striking, were disappointed, and grew cold towards the Fathers; some slight tokens of jealousy were apparent amongst the clergy, and there seemed to be no prospect of vocations to the Institute. Father Rosmini was led to conclude that the time had not come for a permanent foundation in France, and in 1854 he recalled Father Aimo to take charge of the Italian novitiate. This step was soon followed by the closing of the house at Carpentras.

A word, too, must here be said about the Sisters of Providence. Day by day the Congregation had continued to increase and spread. During these years the Sisters made foundations in the diocese of Biella at Mosso Santa Maria, Occhieppo Superiore, Mosso Sella, Candelo, and at Biella itself, at Malesco in the diocese of Novara, and at Sforzesca in the diocese of Vigevano. The little plant set in English soil sprang up and spread its grateful shade and produced abundant fruit. The excellence of this fruit, notably at Newport and at Loughborough, proved that it was worthy

of the parent tree in Italy. The increase of the Sisters certainly multiplied the Founder's cares of government, but it also added to his joys, for nothing could give him greater delight than to see his daughters still preserve the freshness of their early fervour while they grew apace.

It remains now for us to describe Father Rosmini's private life, and the labours to which he devoted his strength and all the time which was not occupied by the care of the two Institutes.

He went, as we have seen, from the novitiate house to the Palazzo Bolongaro in November 1850, and there passed the rest of his life, never leaving it except on some rare occasions, and only at the call of duty. Here, with the members who formed the General's household, he spent his time in study and prayer, or in the triple exercise of charity, so that the house seemed to be a hospice, an athenæum, and a monastery. It will interest the reader to know what was written on the subject at the time by Father Paoli to one of his religious brethren. "This residence of ours, whether it be styled a palace, a house, or a monastery, is, I assure you, the abode of piety, letters, science, hospitality; in fact, of all that can adorn and impart a charm to virtue and render charity fruitful. You understand, I am sure, to whom I am alluding when I say this, and I consider myself indeed fortunate to dwell here. Madame Bolongaro must surely have been inspired by God to leave our Father this house; and though I inclined to the refusal of it when I was called to witness the will, nothing grieves me more at present than to see him desirous of parting with it. However justly one may dislike the pomp of prelates and of worldly people, it is, on the other hand, consoling and edifying to see how worldly grandeur will at times bend before the superior greatness of virtue, and how the latter can use the former, beautifying, while it treads it under foot, even as the starry heavens rest upon the vast and magnificent horizon of this earth. I am convinced that all who, from far or near, consider this monument devoted to the cultiva-

tion of piety and learning, must be edified, unless their minds be warped by petty prejudice or embittered by short-sighted envy. I, who see so much on account of my daily intercourse with our Father, am extremely edified, especially when I compare him as he is here and now, with what he was some ten years ago, when living in one of the poorest houses in Stresa, with poor, uncultured elementary masters, and I find him absolutely unchanged. God wishes to give to the world and to us eminent examples of perfection in every condition of life and in every kind of abode, so that all may say in the words of St. Paul, 'I know both how to be brought low and I know how to abound: (everywhere and in all things I am instructed) both to be full and to be hungry; both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.'[1]

"You will perhaps like to know what we are doing here. Our Very Rev. Father prays, suffers, pardons, believes, hopes, loves, and labours with a power and alacrity which is marvellous to behold. He has brought out the *Logic*,[2] and is engaged on the *Theosophy*. At times we have profound and daring disputations. Our meals, recreation, walks together or with visitors—all are seasoned, thanks to him, with spiritual or learned discourses. Father Gilardi works from morning till night to extract the thorns from our roses, which he manages to do cleverly without pricking his fingers, and finds time besides to exercise works of spiritual charity. Father De Vit hears confessions, and with great success promotes piety and the frequentation of the Sacraments. He is writing a little treatise on temptation, and is bringing out an account of the saints of the Lago Maggiore, while at the same time he is making progress with his learned Lexicon. I am here to fill up a gap; however, I do something for the College of Elementary Masters, teach the students, and continue to scribble away at elementary text-books."

[1] Phil. iv. 12.

[2] *Logica*, published at Turin 1853–4, and by Bertolotti, Intra, 1878.

We may here add some further details of the daily life led by Antonio Rosmini in his new abode at Stresa. It was more or less the same as his former life in the other houses of the Institute. Prayer, study, necessary relaxation, with the fulfilment of duties laid upon him by necessity and charity or propriety, filled his time. He rose at the hour prescribed for all, and though in his later years he slept little, he always awaited the caller for the sake of regular observance. On being called he rose immediately and began to recite the *Credo* audibly, though in a low tone of voice. His lofty intelligence evidently impelled him to begin the day by an act of faith in the eternal truth, and a reminder of the limits within which his high speculations must be kept in order to avoid error. The first hour of the morning was devoted to meditation, after which he celebrated Mass in the Oratory. Many who assisted at his Mass have borne witness to the fact that his aspect was more that of an angel than of a mortal man; his countenance appeared so radiant and, as it were, transfigured that he seemed like a seraph in ecstasy conversing with God. He acknowledged to Father Molinari on one occasion that he had learnt much more during the half-hour of Holy Mass than in ten years' study.

He liked to say his Office with a companion, and generally walking in the garden; he recited it slowly, as if to relish the sentiments it contained, and the fervour of his soul was visible in his countenance. If his companion hastened a little or chanced to mispronounce a word, he would by a look draw his attention to it, and show him that even material exactitude should be attended to in so holy a duty. He was particular about every spiritual duty, such as the examen of conscience twice a day and the recitation of the Rosary in honour of Our Lady, for whom he cherished a most tender devotion. He also recited the *Paters* and *Aves* for various classes of persons which he had prescribed to be said by members of the Order, and before retiring to rest he was accustomed to assemble his religious family and

prepare the points for the morning's meditation on some passage of the Gospel. Besides these public devotions, there were prayers said in private and secretly, known to God alone, and he made very frequent use of ejaculatory prayers, a collection of which he has written. His companions often found him in an attitude of prayer, and we shall not be wrong in saying that the thought of God was present to him throughout the day. Many would be tempted to think that if he had prayed less he might have written more, but we do not hesitate to affirm that if he had prayed less he would have accomplished less. Three or four hours of his morning were devoted to study; he dined at mid-day, and did his correspondence in the evening. Rosmini laboured assiduously, feeling that his end was approaching, and that the longest life would have been insufficient for the task he had in hand, and that what he had hitherto written comprised but the rudimentary principles of human knowledge.

To Father Paoli he once remarked that a hundred years would scarcely allow him time enough to say all he had in his mind, and that the labour he underwent in study and in committing to writing the result of his meditations, would have been almost beyond endurance but for the ineffable pleasure of discovering the truth and communicating it to his fellow-men. It was his custom to invoke the Holy Spirit before beginning to write or dictate, and also to invoke the saint of the day. He wrote rapidly and generally standing, but when dictating he would pace up and down the chamber, and the effort of thought was so great that the perspiration stood out upon his forehead. However deep the argument on which he was engaged, he dictated rapidly and fluently, as if he had long studied no other subject. "It seemed to me," said Luigi Setti, one of his secretaries, "as if an angel were suggesting the words to him, or as if he were reading from an invisible book."

It often happened that he was interrupted by visitors or by members of his household, yet on these occasions he

was not disturbed, and betrayed no sign of impatience, but having transacted the business, he would without hesitation resume his dictation at the point where he had left off. His friends often wondered how he found time to prepare the matter for his works, but we may find the solution in the following words, written to Barola some years previously: "I am convinced that my doctrine is from God, and that He communicates it to me by the light of grace, without much exertion on my part. You will not, I am sure, attribute this to presumption, for I sincerely acknowledge myself unworthy of any such favour." These words recall those of St. Thomas Aquinas to Brother Reginald, when he assured him that his knowledge was less the fruit of labour and study than a gratuitous communication from God.

According to rule he allowed himself a moderate relaxation after dinner and supper, and spent the time in conversation with his household or visitors. He was affable, and ready to converse on any topic that might be introduced, provided it were not trivial or frivolous, and was not eager to monopolise the conversation: he would listen to others with pleasure, never interrupting them, and would from time to time assist them to give expression to their thoughts by a kindly interpretation. Great as was his desire to impart to others whatever was beautiful and true, he seemed to rejoice still more at the acquisition of the least particle of beauty and truth from others, and his joy was greater in proportion to the sublimity of the truth, whose loftiness he perceived from his own point of view.

Amongst the illustrious ecclesiastics who were his guests, we may mention Corte, Barone, Pestalozza, Vercellone, Lacordaire, Wiseman, and Newman, besides many distinguished seculars, such as Arconati, Cibrario, Collegno, Dandolo, Buoncompagni, the Marchese di Cavour, Manzoni, and young Ruggero Bonghi. Always ready to foster youthful promise, Father Rosmini gave hospitality to Bonghi in 1850; he kept him several months at Stresa,

encouraged him to enter on studies higher than literature, and enkindled the love of religion and virtue in his heart by word and example. This act of enlightened charity gave scandal to the Pharisees, but Father Rosmini made no account of that; Bonghi felt deeply grateful for the benefits conferred on him, and retained great veneration and affection during the rest of his life for the Father, whom he called "a most holy man."

We shall only enumerate a few of the many acts of beneficence performed by Father Rosmini during this period. He offered 2000 florins for the establishment of schools at Rovereto, helped to restore St. Mark's Church in that town, provided at his own expense for the instruction of the peasants of St. Hilary's, and for a mission preached to them; he received as a guest a lawyer who was exiled from the Tyrol, and provided him with books and money. Many lesser sums were given by him in alms, of which the servants themselves knew nothing. But I cannot pass over a very striking act of charity towards a blind beggar from Magognino, a little village beyond Stresa. Father Paoli having mentioned that an old blind man served his Mass very devoutly in the parish church, and seemed to be somewhat more cultured than such people usually are, Father Rosmini expressed a wish to see him. He questioned the poor man, told him what he intended to do for him, and sent him there and then to the Master of Novices, with a letter such as only saints can write. I will quote it.

"My Dear Brother in the Lord,—The bearer is a present I am sending to you and your novices. He is one of Christ's poor, blind from his birth, seventy years old and homeless. You will receive him as a guest, clothe him, and feed him, and minister to all his wants, as representing among you the person of Jesus Christ. I desire that our novices especially should consider the poor old man to be a real treasure, because he gives them an opportunity of

showing their love for Jesus Christ, who thus comes to dwell among them. What a privilege is this! The poor blind man will draw down God's blessing on the house. I desire, moreover, that this poor blind man should take his meals with the Community, dispensing in this instance from the rule which excludes externs from the common table."

The holy desires of the Father were carried out; the blind man, welcomed with great joy by the novices and served by them with loving care, stayed ten years in the house, a living and constant reminder of the Father's goodness.

Father Rosmini's writings at this time remain to be spoken of. Besides a number of important letters on scientific subjects, he brought out some lesser works, such as a polemical treatise on the *Legge dubbia*, in reply to Scavini; a discourse preached on occasion of the Sostegno-Cavour wedding; the discourses on *Sacrifice* and *Charity*;[1] Counsels to Marietta Rosmini on occasion of her marriage; three articles in the *Armonia* in the year 1850 against the Siccardi laws; twenty-eight others printed in 1851 *On the Laws relating to Christian Matrimony*, which were afterwards issued in an elegant little volume, of which seven editions appeared in Italian and one in French;[2] and *Further Essays on Matrimony*, printed in 1852. In the year 1853 he wrote in the *Armonia* a series of articles treating of the principal politico-religious questions of the day and of their proper solution, and in 1854 he developed the question of *The Liberty of Teaching*. This essay points out the real meaning of liberty of teaching, lays down the rights of the Church in framing laws on education, the rights of the earned, the rights of parents, the rights of the founders and managers of schools, the rights of the local authorities,

[1] Published by Casuccio, Casale, 1852, and in the *Discorsi*, Bertolotti, Intra, 1871.

[2] The latest edition of *Matrimonio*, with the Imprimatur of the Master of the Sacred Palace, was issued at Rome in 1902.

and those of the central government. Passing on to more important works, we must not omit the fifth edition of the *Nuovo Saggio*, not only on account of the notes, indexes, and other improvements supplied by the author, but chiefly on account of the *Introduction to the Ideological Works*, which he prefixed to it, to remove the false impression of his philosophical system produced by Bertini's adverse criticism. In 1850 he brought out the *Introduction to Philosophy*.[1] The object of this volume is to point out the unity of his system, and how all his works are connected one with another like the members of one body. Of the eight essays contained in this book, the first, *On the Studies of the Author*, has a special value as being an entirely new work. Here Father Rosmini indicates the ends to which his works were directed under four heads: 1st, to combat prevailing errors; 2nd, to present truth in a systematic form; 3rd, to provide a system of philosophy which may form a solid basis for the sciences; 4th, to be of service to theology. His *Logic*, commenced in 1850 and finished in 1851, only appeared in 1854. In this work Father Rosmini availed himself largely of the *Organum* of Aristotle. After defining *Logic*, and determining its extent and its limits, he divides the work into three parts. The first part treats of *Assent*, a subject unknown to the ancients; he lays down the theory of Assent, and then states the rules according to which it should be given or withheld. The second part is on the *Art of Reasoning*, and comprises four sections: (i) on the *Judgment of the Mind;* (ii) on *Syllogisms;* (iii) on *Sophisms*, which he reduces to three classes, according as the defect is in the *matter* of the syllogism, in its *form*, or in its *object;* (iv) on *Method*. The third book treats on the *Criterion* of *truth* or *certainty*.

The work entitled *Aristotle Examined and Explained*,[2]

[1] *Introduzione alla Filosofia*, published by Casuccio, Casale, 1850.

[2] *Aristotele Esposto ed Esaminato*, published by the Società-Editrice, Turin, 1857.

finished in 1853, was not published till after the death of the author. It is strictly philosophical, directed to point out the true and the false in the system of Aristotle, and to make the sense of the author plain by clearing up certain ambiguous expressions. By this work Father Rosmini wished to pave the way to the metaphysical part of his system, namely, the *Theosophy*. Tommaseo, an able critic, writes of this work on Aristotle: "Of the many writers upon Aristotle in the course of centuries in every nation and in every language, no one, perhaps, has judged him more severely, defended him more acutely, and more honestly pointed out his admirable genius even in his errors."

The doctrines contained in these works had numerous opponents, some of whom were in good faith, some in doubt, and others in bad faith; in the next chapter we shall have leisure to contemplate some of the most active and obstinate. In spite of this contradiction, partly indeed because of it, friends and supporters of Rosminian doctrines increased in number. Amongst these some are worthy of note—Bertazzi, a priest from Brescia; Curti, a Milanese; Buroni, from Piacenza; Ferrè, archpriest of Crema and Casale; Father Ugolino Fasolis, from Sommariva, a Minor Observantine; and Father Bernardo, from Cappannori, a Capuchin. Manzoni spoke in praise of Rosminian principles in a letter to the Emperor of Brazil, recasting the eulogium formerly expressed in his dialogue on *Invenzione*. This letter was in reply to one addressed to him by the Emperor on the subject of Italian literature. Manzoni writes: "At the risk of appearing ignorant in my own country, I must confess that I have but a scanty acquaintance with modern Italian prose writers, and even if it were otherwise I should find it difficult to make a choice. Still, in order to comply with your request, I venture to mention one, the Abate Rosmini, less as a writer than as an original thinker. It may be that his name is almost unknown to you, for even in Italy it has by no means attained the

celebrity due to it, and which it will doubtless enjoy in course of time."[1] About this time, too, the Academy of the Agiati, on occasion of its first centenary, chose Father Rosmini as its President "in homage to wisdom and virtue persecuted"; whilst the Accademia della Crusca elected him to fill the place left vacant by the death of Balbo.

[1] Letter of Manzoni to His Majesty Don Pedro d'Alcantara. Emperor of Brazil.

CHAPTER XXVI

FRESH TRIALS—ACCUSATIONS—WORKS DENOUNCED AND EXAMINED—SOLEMN ACQUITTAL (1848–1854)

THE faithful Christian welcomes persecution on account of the good he may derive from such trials. Although Father Rosmini never made enemies intentionally, yet it is certain that he had enemies, and it is equally certain that by their opposition he gained more than he lost, because, in the first place, it was an occasion for exercising the sublime precept of charity, "Love your enemies"; and secondly, because the beatitude is promised to those who suffer persecution for justice' sake.

If we regard the persecution we are now about to describe in respect to the quarter whence it came, the manner in which it was conducted, or the end it had in view, we shall find that it was not only connected with the previous one but was the same under a different aspect. When first begun under Pope Gregory XVI. it was theological; under Pius IX. it was political; now it was theological, philosophical and political at one and the same time, and was directed to the suppression of the Institute of Charity. As on the former occasion, so also on this, it was beneficial to the victim, for it is wisely ordained that sooner or later persecuted virtue shall be reinstated, and once more attain its former or even higher eminence.

> "Come la fronda che flette la cima
> Nel transito del vento, e poi la leva
> Per la propria virtù che la sublima."

When Pope Gregory imposed silence on both parties, Father Rosmini foresaw that though this decree might suppress the fire it would not extinguish it; in fact, no

sooner was the Pontiff dead than his adversaries began to stir it up once more. As early as January 1848, they began to make their way into the episcopal courts of Italy with a book entitled *Postille*, designed to secure from the Bishops a vote against Rosminian doctrines, and thus induce the Holy See to condemn them. The *Postille* form a good-sized volume without title or author's name; each page is in two columns, one with the Rosminian text, often distorted and garbled, the other with the commentary and the censures. There are three hundred and twenty-seven of these *postille*, and the remarks comprise every note in the dictionary of theological censure, from the mildest, such as *novelty* and *ambiguity*, up to the gravest, such as *absurdity*, *blasphemy*, and *heresy*.

Several Bishops, amongst others the Bishop of Rovigo, the Patriarch of Venice, and Cardinal Baluffi, Bishop of Imola, rejected with disdain both the libel and the insidious memorial which accompanied it; others, however, were caught in the snare. When it became known that Father Rosmini enjoyed the favour of Pope Pius IX., who intended to make him a Cardinal, the matter subsided for a time, but no sooner were his two works prohibited than it was promptly revived. All was planned in such an insidious way, and so cleverly, that up to October 1850 Father Rosmini had not succeeded in obtaining a copy of the *Postille*.

In 1850 Pestalozza was able to obtain it from his Archbishop, and set to work to examine and refute it in a series of *Observations*. Before his essay could be brought out, two volumes were published in Milan itself entitled *Familiar Letters of a Bolognese Priest*, full of all sorts of accusations against Rosminian doctrines, and insisting principally on that of Jansenism. In these letters Rosmini is assailed with infamous epithets, such as ignoramus, a Protean time-server, eccentric, hypocritical, stubborn, a Jansenist wolf, teacher of infernal doctrines, a public impostor, traitor to the Church—and still worse.

About the same time Count Avogadro della Motta, in an appendix to his *Essay on Socialism*, harped on the same accusations in terms less discourteous. Rosmini made no reply, thinking it would be waste of time, but Father Gilardi wrote a brief reply to the *Letters* of the Bolognese; a Milanese priest named Curti, who undertook to make a fuller reply, finally ceded his place to Pestalozza, and the latter ably refuted both accusers in a work of two volumes.

Whilst Father Rosmini's adversaries were thus exerting themselves to get his works condemned by the Holy See, reports were spread in Italy, France, and England that the condemnation was now certain and close at hand. At this news some Bishops took alarm and opposed vocations to the Institute; Cardinal Wiseman forbade the Rosminians to preach in his diocese; persons in authority sought to remove the Sisters in England from their Founder's jurisdiction, but under this trial Dr. Ullathorne befriended and protected them.

We may easily imagine Father Rosmini's grief at this unjust and unmerciful treatment, intensified by his knowledge of the ultimate object to which the slander was directed; but his sorrow had no tinge of disquiet or bitterness—it was full of peace and ineffable joy. Let us hear his own words. "In the midst of so many causes of sadness," he writes to Barola, "our Lord grants me perfect peace, and a firm confidence that He who chastises and appoints the time for sorrow, will afterwards console and send a period of joy to those who hope in Him." To Pestalozza he writes, "The war is being carried on with ever-increasing activity. I know that my enemies cannot do one tittle more than God allows; therefore I am quite at peace about it, and content with all that happens." Again, to the Marchese Cavour, "In my trials God gives me perfect peace and content, and I thank Him from my heart." Then he tells him the threefold intention of his adversaries—to get his works condemned, to have him

deposed from his office of General, and to destroy the Institute under pretence of improving upon it—adding, "I desire nothing but what God wills, and I will bless Him for everything. If God allows the Institute to be destroyed, even this will be for His glory, for His ways are unsearchable."

In 1850 Pius IX., having returned to Rome, received the denunciations of some Bishops, and entrusted the Congregation of the Index with the examination of the *Postille* and the accusations therein contained. Father Vercellone, a Barnabite, who was deputed to write his opinion of the *Postille*, judged them worthless, the outcome of ignorance and of a mania for censure. Disconcerted, but not disheartened by this opinion, the adversaries contrived to get another Consultor heard; Father Secchi-Murro was selected —the same who, while the Rule was under examination, had so bitterly opposed the form of poverty professed in the Institute. This time the tables were turned, for the Servite was an honest man, and at once condemned the violation of Pope Gregory's decree of silence, unmasked the malicious plans of the author of the *Postille*, and gave his opinion that the libel ought to be suppressed because it was compiled "without discretion and without conscience, simply for the purpose of defaming one of the greatest minds and one of the holiest and most zealous priests of whom the Church could boast." The preparatory meeting of Consultors in December was unanimous in voting the prohibition of the libel; but the General Congregation, presided over by Cardinal Brignole, who had succeeded in having the *Five Wounds* and the *Constitution* proscribed at Naples, did not deem it expedient to prohibit the *Postille*, though it rejected the work as false.

This decision ought to have been sufficient to silence the accusers; but as the *Letters of a Bolognese Priest* and Della Motta's book had meanwhile come on the scene with fresh accusations, Pius IX. thought it necessary to institute a fuller and more solemn examination of all Father Rosmini's

works, so as to settle all questions by a peremptory sentence. His first step was to send to the General of the Jesuits and then to Father Rosmini by Mgr. Santucci a brief dated March 13, 1851, renewing the injunction of silence already imposed by Pope Gregory, and at the same time announcing the proposed examination of the doctrines by the Holy See. Not that Pius IX. considered them infected with the errors in question, but he wished them freed from censure, and he desired to restore the good name of one whom he continued to love and admire. It must be remembered that on his return to Rome, the Holy Father said openly to Cardinal Castracane that his feelings towards Rosmini were unchanged, and of this he greatly wished to give him some public proof. This public testimony was prevented by the wiles of those who surrounded the Pontiff and were anxious to bias him against Father Rosmini and his Institute, which latter was perhaps in their eyes the sharpest thorn of all. They represented him as being in favour with the Liberals, tainted with their ideas, and friendly to the Civil Constitution; and as one who had never withdrawn what he had written in its favour. A rumour against the Institute went round, chiefly in Rome, that the Apostolic Letters had been surreptitiously obtained; but fortunately there were some persons still living who had no difficulty in refuting the calumny—Mgr. Pacifici, who had drawn up the document, Cardinal Castracane, and others. Things went further still, and one individual, whose name in charity we suppress, was bold enough to present a memorial asking for the suppression of the Institute, to the great displeasure of the Pope, who mentioned the fact to Cardinal Castracane.

Matters having gone thus far, Father Rosmini wondered if he ought to take steps in self-defence or abandon his cause to Providence: at last, following wise and friendly advice, he resolved to send his Procurator, Father Bertetti, to Rome, that he might in a familiar manner represent the afflictions of the Institute to the Holy Father and be

guided by him. Bertetti was a man of mature judgment, and prudent above his years: he was undoubtedly well versed in Rosminian doctrines, and to these intellectual gifts were added a noble presence, refinement of manner, and gravity in speech, so that it would have been difficult to find one better fitted for the weighty undertaking. The Pope received him kindly, and promised to let him have the written opinions of the Consultors, that he might send them on to Father Rosmini, who could then, if necessary, furnish explanations of his views. The first Consultors were five in number : Canon Fazzini ; Mgr. Tizzani, Bishop of Terni; Father Gigli, a Dominican; Father da Rignano, a Friar Minor Observantine; and Monsignor di S. Marzano, Archbishop of Ephesus. The Holy Father chose them himself privately, and forbade them to communicate their views to one another. To lighten their labour, Father Bertetti collected under the title of *Allegati* a number of documents, and a catalogue of Father Rosmini's works—eighty-two in number, not including works annotated by him or newspaper articles—with an indication of the scope and characteristics of each.

The examination of such a number of works took time, and meanwhile the adverse party was not idle. The strangest reports were circulated ; such as that Father Rosmini had been reading the works of Tamburini at Rovereto, and that he made friends with the demagogues at Naples, that he had Bonghi with him at Stresa, and similar stories. The Bolognese priest, being now compelled to stop the printing of the third volume of his *Letters*, sent a number of copies of the other two volumes to Rome, and flooded the Sacred Congregation with manuscripts containing further accusations. Vitali, Curti, Pestalozza, and other Rosminians among the Milanese clergy were subjected to petty annoyances from the episcopal court and even from the civil Censor, who made common cause with the opponents. A drastic decree dismissed sixteen of the superiors and professors of the seminary at Milan. The

idle stories that went round reached the ears of the Pope; and although they did not alter his esteem for Father Rosmini, they sometimes made him look sad. "The Holy Father," said Cardinal Altieri to Father Bertetti, "still entertains the same esteem and affection for Rosmini"; but *circumdederunt me canes multi.* In a letter to Rosmini, May 31, 1851, the Baroness Koenneritz, writing of her audience with the Pope, says, "How happy was I to hear from the Holy Father himself that he still entertains the same sympathy and esteem for you, and that he has allowed the examination of your works simply to put an end to adverse criticism and calumnies! I cannot express my satisfaction at being able to say with complete conviction that the mind of Pius IX. is unchanged in your regard."

While the work of the Consultors was still in the fervour of its beginnings, Cardinal Castracane, weighed down by years and labours, passed to his eternal repose on the 22nd of February 1852, and was assisted with filial affection on his deathbed by Father Bertetti, who gave him the last Sacraments. We cannot express the deep sorrow felt by Father Rosmini at the loss of such a friend and benefactor; he ordered suffrages for the repose of his soul in all the houses of the Institute. "Men die," he wrote immediately to Father Bertetti, "but God never dies, and therefore He in whom our hopes are placed remains always with us."

Three days after Cardinal Castracane's death, an incident occurred, too grave to be passed over by a biographer. Father Rosmini thus alludes to it in his diary: "(To-day) the garden at Stresa was entered by a man well dressed in black, with a blue overcoat; he encountered Antonio Carli, and asked him if he was the Abate Rosmini's attendant. Carli having answered in the affirmative, the stranger said he had a favour to ask of him; it was a mere nothing, but if he would be willing to do it, a large sum of money should be his. Then he took from his pocket a small phial

and asked the brother to pour the contents into the morning coffee or chocolate of the Abate Rosmini. Carli, astounded at the proposal, declared he would do nothing of the kind; upon which the stranger hastily begged him not to disturb himself, and then quietly left the garden and went straight to the shore of the lake close by. There a boat with three or four rowers was in readiness; the stranger stepped in, and was soon out of sight." Who was this person? Was he a madman, a fanatic, or a hired assassin? What could have been his motive for such a wicked act? Was it envy, jealousy, false zeal, political animosity, or desire of revenge? Was this attempt a thing apart, or could it have been in some way connected with the persecution then raging so fiercely against Father Rosmini? On this point nothing was ever ascertained, and conjecture would now be foolish and hazardous.

After more than a year's study the opinions of the five Consultors were ready. Four of them were extremely favourable—they were, in fact, a real eulogium of Rosminian doctrine. Canon Fazzini's was unfavourable; he had been prejudiced to begin with, and thought he could discover in the works under examination all the errors which have inundated the world since the days of Nimrod. This vote was a discordant note in the midst of the harmony of the others, and it was necessary to call in another Consultor. The concluding words of the vote given by Mgr. Tizzani, Bishop of Terni, are worth quoting. His written opinion states that "the works of Father Rosmini are not only free from any doctrine deserving of censure, but that his teaching is most useful for the refutation of modern philosophical, irreligious ideas." With respect to the ideological system, he declares that it is "not only free from error, but calculated to refute every error." The good Bishop who wrote this was afterwards Patriarch of Antioch, and died in Rome in 1892; he had been blind for some years before his death, and used to say that his close study of Rosmini's works had cost him the sight of one eye, but

the study had convinced him that "Rosmini was not only the greatest philosopher of our age, but one endowed with the highest wisdom and most brilliant Christian virtues."

The sixth Consultor was Father Secchi-Murro, who, being quite in accord with the first four, undertook to refute the vote given by Canon Fazzini, and declared the works free from reproach, especially from the taint of pantheism on which the Canon had most strongly insisted; he concluded by saying that they merited no censure, and that a decree should be issued to restore the author's good name.

The case had reached this point in September 1852, and the Congregation of Consultors ought to have met at once; but the adversaries—favoured by Cardinal Brignole, Prefect of the Index—having a presentiment of defeat, endeavoured to procure some delay which might enable them to gain ground. Pope Pius IX. on his side, desiring to proceed with the utmost prudence and impartiality, privately deputed two new Consultors to go through all Father Rosmini's works, together with the accusations and the defence, after which they were each to write a vote. These Consultors were Father Caiazza de' Romitani, an Augustinian, and Father Trullet, a Friar Minor Conventual. In June 1853 Cardinal Brignole died rather suddenly, and was succeeded by Cardinal d'Andrea, who soon perceived the injustice of the persecution to which Rosmini had been subjected, and did his best to bring the cause to a termination. An attempt was made to intimidate him by means of anonymous letters, but he was not the man to notice them, and went on without hesitation. Still, it was necessary to wait for the votes of the two new Consultors, and the delay was very welcome to the adverse party. By making a pretence of attacking Gioberti and the pantheists and other ontologists of the same stamp, they cunningly contrived to assail Father Rosmini; but at this attack the Pope showed his displeasure. About this time it happened that disturbances took place in the seminary at Monza, and this was represented

to the Pope as being the outcome of Rosminian doctrines, but the Pontiff saw through the trick, and imputed the blame to the persons in fault. With these disturbances as a pretext, an attempt was made in a meeting of Bishops at Lodi to draw up a memorial against Father Rosmini; but the energetic remonstrances of the Bishops of Cremona and Mantua and of Mgr. Ferré, Vicar-Capitular of Crema, thwarted the design. A similar effort was made in an assembly of Bishops at Vercelli, but the Archbishop, Mgr. d'Angennes, cut the proposal short by saying that he had no intention of allowing such follies in his house. Indeed, several of the Bishops of Piedmont, seeing that the delay in the process was injurious to our Father's good name and to the charitable works carried on by him and his Institute, as well as to the Sisters of Providence, besought the Holy See to give a definite decision; these were the Archbishops of Vercelli and Genoa, the Bishops of Susa, Ivrea, Biella, Novara, Vigevano, Casale, Pinerolo, and Asti. Their request was very favourably received by the Holy Father.

It pleased God that in March 1853 the last two votes were ready. Caiazza's was short and pithy; Trullet's fuller and more weighty; but both were more than a defence, they were a splendid justification of the doctrines that had been called in question. Canon Fazzini was allowed to make a reply, which he did by his *Observations*, a final answer being given to them by Trullet.

The examination now seemed ripe, and the preliminary meeting of Consultors was summoned for the 26th of April. Cardinal d'Andrea himself presided—a very unusual thing—and, besides those who had written their votes, seven other Consultors were summoned at the Holy Father's desire. These were Buttaoni, Master of the Sacred Palace; Mgr. Cardoni, Bishop of Caristo; Professor Rezzi, librarian of the Corsiniana; Father Zuppani, a Camaldolese; Father Smith, a Benedictine; Father Barola; and Father Maroccu, a Friar Minor Conventual. The discussion was

long, animated, and dignified; Canon Fazzini, subdued by the force of their arguments, said he should abstain from voting. Three questions were proposed. To the first, whether the works of Father Rosmini were deserving of censure, the unanimous reply was that nothing in them deserved censure. *Nil plane in eis offendi censura dignum.* To the second question, whether this sentence should be published, all were agreed that it should be. The third question as to the examination of the calumnious pamphlets, viz., the *Postille*, the *Letters of the Bolognese Priest*, and Della Motta's *Appendix*, was answered in the affirmative by a majority: "That the writings bearing the titles of *Le Postille* and *Lettere di un Prete Bolognese* deserve condemnation." The others left the matter to the judgment of the Holy See, asking that the fame of the illustrious writer (Rosmini) should be defended. The decision of the Congregation was all that could be desired: it remained for definitive judgment to be pronounced by the general meeting which was fixed for the 3rd of July at the Vatican Palace.

Perceiving that the cause was drawing to a close, the enemy of all good roused himself for a final effort. Some raised an outcry against the judgments of the Consultors; others hinted to the Holy Father that it would never do to put the adverse party to shame, they had deserved so well of the Church; some tried to induce him to refer the question to the Holy Office. "We are the Holy Office," curtly said Pius IX. to these last; "we shall preside in person at the meeting, and all difficulties will be removed." But the plea that the adversaries should not be humbled made a certain impression on his mind, and he was heard to say, "Justice is the right thing, but prudence also is one of the cardinal virtues; we must take a middle course." Outside Rome, too, the faction became more violent: whilst no one was allowed to breathe a word in Father Rosmini's defence, the other party were free to use their efforts against him. Pestalozza was not permitted to print

his third volume in reply to the Bolognese priest, whilst Mura, a Servite, wrote most bitterly in a philosophical treatise against Father Rosmini, and the *Univers* lauded the Bolognese priest, styling him a typical controversialist, and describing him as something marvellous, not only for his clear, penetrating, and logical mind, but for his bearing, his tone of voice, and the very hairs of his beard.

How different from all this was Father Rosmini's way of acting! In those days of anxious waiting, when the tide ebbed and flowed from fear to hope in the hearts of those who loved him, his soul, mighty in its peace, reposed in the Providence of God like a child in its mother's arms. He waited for the judgment of the Holy See with humble confidence, and in anticipation, submitted to it with his whole soul. There were moments when he might appear discouraged, though he was not so; as, for instance, when he thought of retiring from the government of the Order, seeing that his adversaries were determined to bring ruin upon him. This was not discouragement, but a longing to seek retirement, that he might prepare for death, and at the same time save the Institute from the shipwreck with which it was threatened. God was pleased to accept his goodwill, but not the sacrifice, and to the infinite joy of his subjects he continued to govern them to the end of his life. "God is my witness that I am speaking the truth," he wrote to Father Bertetti, "when I say that I have never desired anything but sound doctrine and the edification of my neighbour; consequently, I have not, and never have had, the intention or will to cling obstinately to my own opinions or to my way of expressing them; and, having but too much reason to distrust myself, I have always submitted them to the judgment of the Apostolic See, quite ready to change, retract, or modify them, or to express them differently, just as I should be directed by that faithful and venerated mother. Even if it should happen to me, as it might happen to any man, that I were not able to understand the reason of what was com-

manded me, it would cause me no trouble, nor would it be the slightest hindrance in the way of professing my fullest and sincerest obedience; I should reject my own judgment and embrace with the utmost contentment what was taught me." The length of this trial, together with the distress and harm suffered by the Institute, caused him pain, but did not disturb his peace. "I am so happy about my humiliation," he wrote to the Baroness Koenneritz, "that I should not wish to be relieved from it, except to conform myself anew to the Divine Will." Thus do the lofty mountain heights appear to look down upon the lightning flash and hear the thunder roar, while their towering summits bask in the peaceful light of heaven.

One day, when the fury of his enemies was at its height, he went out on the terrace as if to refresh himself with the sight of Nature's smile. For a short time he stood contemplating the enchanting beauty of heaven and earth reflected in the transparent waters of the lake; then, deeply touched, he soared in thought to a beauty more sublime, and exclaimed with a radiant countenance, "There are moments when I seem to feel as Adam did in his innocence; so beautiful to me is all I see! Persecution itself appears beautiful!" Noble soul, to whom his very persecutions were beautiful!

As the 3rd of July drew nearer, Father Rosmini, who had placed his cause in the hands of God and not of man, redoubled his prayers, and directed his sons and daughters to do the like. Thousands of Masses were offered up in England and in Italy, besides triduos and other devotions, whilst larger alms were distributed to the poor. In the churches at Calvario, San Michele, and the novitiate at Stresa, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed during the time of the meeting of the Congregation at Rome. At Stresa Father Rosmini was to be seen with his sons bowed down by the hour in prayer, his eyes half closed, immovable in profound contemplation; then, with a cheerful and radiant countenance, he arose like one who has come to an under-

standing with God. Pius IX. determined to preside at the Congregation himself—a thing unprecedented, perhaps, except when Benedict XIV. decided the cause of Cardinal Noris. Eight Cardinals were present, and the same Consultors that had been at the preparatory meeting, except Tizzani and Buttaoni, who were absent through illness. The Cardinals were D'Andrea, Cagiano, Della Genga, Brunelli, Bofondi, Mai, Recanati, and Marini. Each of these Consultors read a brief summary of his view; Fazzini stated that he still had his doubts, but placed himself in the hands of the Holy Father. The Cardinals agreed from the first that Father Rosmini's works ought to be freed from all accusations; but they were not of one mind as to the manner of silencing the accusers, and, as they could not come to a conclusion, it was decided that all Rosmini's works should be simply dismissed. After a sitting of five hours the Holy Father concluded by saying that he would reserve definitive judgment to himself; he added that he wished to see peace among his children, and that Father Rosmini, who had deserved so well of the Church that he had determined to raise him to the purple, must be treated with honour. Father Paoli says further that Pius IX. was heard to exclaim, "Praised be God, who sends such men from time to time for the good of His Church." Father Rosmini, on hearing from Father Bertetti the result of the sitting, wrote with his usual equanimity, "Let us first thank God for what is done and for what will be done, because all that takes place here below is decreed in the council of the Most Holy Trinity; there is our family council, and its decrees are dictated and written from pure love."

The Pope's original intention was to make the decree of dismissal known to Father Rosmini by a Brief which would publicly restore his good name, but he was dissuaded from issuing it by those who represented that he ought not to humble the accusers too deeply. He contented himself, therefore, with ordering that the sentence should be

privately communicated to both parties. The decree was dated July 15, 1854, and ran as follows: "It is necessary that all the works of Antonio Rosmini-Serbati, which have recently been examined, should be dismissed; and this examination must not be held to detract in any way from the name of the author or the religious Society founded by him, from the praise due to his life, and his singular deserts with regard to the Church. And in order that there may be no cause for reviving and spreading accusations and differences, let it be understood that silence is imposed for the third time on both parties by order of the Holy Father." Even then an attempt was made to nullify the sentence, by twisting the words and the sense with mean, sophistical quibbles, as if the Holy See had laboured four years in arduous investigations to bring forth a trumpery sentence! Pius IX., however, repeated without ambiguity to both parties that nothing censurable was found in Rosmini's works. Thus he plainly told Mgr. Riccabona, a new bishop, that he was "to give his clergy to understand that there was nothing erroneous in Rosmini's works, which had been examined"; and he added that he had not allowed "the prohibition of the libel, solely out of regard for the authors." He said still more to the Bishop of Cremona. "Rosmini is not only a good Catholic, but a saint; God makes use of saints to secure the triumph of truth." When, twenty years later, an attempt was made to revive the process, the aged Pontiff, whom God's wise providence had preserved, manfully asserted himself, and maintained his sentence intact.

CHAPTER XXVII

FURTHER AFFLICTIONS—FATHER ROSMINI'S CLOSING DAYS (1854–1855)

Father Rosmini, while waiting the decision of the Pope and the Sacred Congregation of the Index, failed not to suggest certain precautions which seemed to him necessary for the honour of the Holy See and the permanent establishment of peace, but his suggestions were disregarded.

Moreover, an attempt was made to turn the tide against him, and make him, though innocent, appear to acknowledge himself guilty, even after he had been acquitted. Cardinal Recanati was drawn into the mesh, though in perfect good faith, for he was too upright and pious a prelate knowingly to lay a snare for Rosmini. In a letter dated the 13th of July, this Cardinal advised him to write a pamphlet—1st, in order to make a public profession of each and every truth of Catholic faith contrary to the errors imputed to him; 2nd, to inform the public that he was preparing notes and explanations of those passages in his works which to some persons had appeared erroneous. In this way he would remove the scandal of the weak and make his own orthodoxy more evident. Father Rosmini easily perceived the trick, and, after recommending the matter to God, answered the Cardinal humbly and candidly that he could not follow his advice, at least without some modification. He would willingly receive from him or from any one an indication of the passages that seemed to require explanatory notes; whereas to come forward of his own accord and make a profession of faith and promise explanations, would simply mean condemning himself after the Holy See had declared him innocent. The

readers of his works were not the weak; the scandal given to them was artificially created by calumnious libels, and could only be removed by those in authority, Any explanations of his would be ineffectual; they would cavil at them, would say that heretics had done the like, that heretics always knew how to make pretences, and that his declaration had been made under compulsion. It would become a source of perpetual discord between his Institute and his opponents. And, after all, it could not be according to the mind and heart of the Holy Father to make a poor priest, now old and worn out, interrupt the work he was carrying on for the good of the Church, and spend his few remaining years in the useless and unwelcome task of collating a host of tedious books by objectors, with more than twenty large volumes of his own, in order to write explanations, though the Holy See had found nothing deserving of censure in his works. This frank reply was sufficient to draw the Cardinal's attention to the intrigue which his simplicity had failed to discern, and shortly afterwards he uttered these memorable words to Father Bertetti: "I consider Rosmini the greatest man living at the present day, not only in Italy but in Europe; he is a saint, and the time will come when, as in the case of Calasanctius and others, it will be evident that all those who disliked him or who persecuted him and his Institute, will be convicted of disliking or of persecuting the work of God."

Although the letter of Cardinal Recanati was a source of grief to our beloved Father, it did not deprive him of his peace of heart. He wrote to Father Bertetti on the 22nd of July 1854, "We must keep ourselves in a state of perfect indifference with regard to the action of the Holy Father, so that in case anything should be decided contrary to our expectations it may not disturb us, but augment our peace and our gratitude towards the infinite goodness of God, who disposes all things to our greater good."

Some, however, took advantage of the reply to Cardinal

Recanati, and gave vent to their malice; upon which Rosmini, to put a stop to this, sent a message to Buttaoni, Master of the Sacred Palace, that if Rome approved he would willingly get the works touching on *Moral Theology* reprinted (for these were the most controverted), and also two discourses, one on *Theological Language*, the other on *Rationalism in Theology*. On hearing that the Pope was pleased with the idea, he set to work. He then recalled Father Bertetti from Rome to confide the government of the Italian province to him and to relieve Father Puecher, who was overworked and ailing. Before leaving Rome Father Bertetti went to thank the Sovereign Pontiff, who spoke of the great esteem he always felt for Rosmini, adding, "Who knows whether I may not recall him to Rome to help me?" Father Bertetti's departure was deplored by friends of the cause. One of these, with wise forethought, remarked, "The irritation of your adversaries is so great that even if the present Pope remains firm in refusing a fresh examination, it will be almost impossible to prevent the rekindling of the fire on the accession of a new Pontiff."

It was not long before the sentence of the Congregation, communicated privately to both parties, became public property. The *Journal des Débats* was the first to speak of it, then the *Univers* and other French papers, from which it found its way to Italy. Father Rosmini's friends were delighted; his opponents were put to confusion, and, being unable to deny the fact, endeavoured to misrepresent it. Anonymous letters appeared in the newspapers giving a false account of the proceedings, and even attempting to improve the Latin of the Sacred Congregation by changing *Dimittantur opera* into *Remittantur*, implying that they were referred back to the Holy Office for a fresh examination; or again, by substituting *causa* for *opera*, they pretended that the cause was only suspended (*Dimittantur causa*), and was therefore to be taken up again at the first denunciation. With utter disregard of the precept of

silence, another effort was made to induce Bishops to make these denunciations, and there was one Piedmontese Bishop, Mgr. Contratti, Bishop of Acqui, whose zeal led him to denounce Rosmini and his doctrines—not indeed to the Holy See, but to the clergy and people of his diocese, in a pastoral letter—thus helping to keep alive the flame of discord instead of promoting the peace desired by the Holy Father.

Father Rosmini left the newspapers to have their say, no less than the Bishop of Acqui, without suffering his peace to be disturbed. "My adversaries give themselves no rest," he wrote to Cardinal Tosti, "but my trust is in God, and I hope that with His help I shall never lose my resignation and my tranquillity; indeed I shall never cease to praise Him for everything He is pleased to do or to permit." To Mgr. Hohenlohe he writes, "What we seek is light, the glory of God and of the Church, and the salvation of souls. I have always remained tranquil, and I hope that the prayers of the good will continue to obtain for me grace to preserve that tranquillity and peace surpassing all understanding, which Jesus Christ has brought us." In a letter to Don Bernard Smith he wrote that the false rumours circulated in Ireland did not surprise him, since the same reports were to be heard in the north of Italy. "I am not disturbed, however," he continues; "I leave the whole matter in the hands of our Lord and God, who is Truth itself, and who loves so tenderly His spouse, the Church. As for myself, there is nothing my adversaries can do against me, for I do not seek my own glory."

To Father Molinari he writes in gentle reproof, "For some time past I have noticed that your letters have been full of fears and gloomy forebodings; I should not like to think it could arise from praying but little. In peace and confidence let us be prepared for everything. Let us leave God to work mercies and wonders according to His will." Thanks to this vigorous peace of soul, notwithstanding

his broken health, he was able in this last year of his life to devote himself with almost youthful energy to the government of his Institute, whilst working out the last and most lofty portions of the philosophical edifice which he had planned in his early days. At the same time he exerted himself in defence of the rights of the Church with his pen and his advice, besides exercising charity in many other ways, as we are about to narrate.

Towards the middle of August 1854, perceiving, it may be, that his end was approaching, he went to the house of the parish priest at Borgomanero, where he made his will, naming Father Paoli his heir in the Tyrol, and Father Bertetti in Italy, of the property which he held according to the *Constitutions* of the Institute, recommending them to be mindful of Paoli Orsi, Barola, and Cardinal Tosti, whom he honours with the title of "faithful friends." At the end of the month we find him setting out for the Tyrol, which he had not visited for seven years. Here he despatched some business, and after gladdening his friends with his presence, and consoling the poor, he returned to Stresa about the middle of October, suffering from the malady which was to carry him to the grave. From that time he never left Stresa, but devoted himself, as long as a particle of strength remained, to the works which he felt Providence had destined him to accomplish.

The first among these was the government of his little Society, to which he applied himself indefatigably, so as to give it the more perfect form which its development now rendered possible. Having made Father Bertetti Provincial in Italy, he gave him Father Cappa as assistant, and provided them with the *Rules of the Provincial and his Socius;* Father Aimo, now recalled from Carpentras, was appointed Master of Novices; Father Puecher was entrusted with the direction of the theological studies and the teaching of sacred eloquence, in which he was proficient. The English province continued to prosper under the mild and prudent government of Father Pagani, and in 1854 two

new missions were opened, one at Cardiff, at the request of Bishop Brown, the other at Kingsland in London itself, at the instance of Cardinal Wiseman. Father Rosmini hoped, when the weather grew warmer, to gladden these dear sons of his by a visit, but God did not will it.

The Sisters of Providence continued to increase in number both in England and in Italy; they devoted themselves to the care of children, edifying all by their virtuous example, and consoling their Father, who devoted himself so patiently to their welfare.

Next to this duty to his Institutes he carried on his usual correspondence, many of his letters in answer to inquiries being of great scientific importance, besides those on religious matters. These letters, though written in a simple and familiar style, are nevertheless most precious to lovers of truth, on account of the philosophical and religious truths which they contain.

Another work, worthy of a Christian priest and philosopher, to which he generously consecrated his failing strength, was the defence of the rights of the Church, then persecuted in Piedmont in the name of liberty. At the invitation of Mgr. Moreno, who stood first among the Bishops in his zeal for justice, he undertook to continue his articles on *Liberty of Teaching*, and on *Politico-religious Questions*. When a proposal was introduced in the Chamber for the confiscation of ecclesiastical property and the suppression of the religious Orders, he urged the Marchese di Cavour and Ghiglini to fight vigorously against it, supplied them with arguments, and, taking up his pen, wrote a series of weighty articles, of which only two were published in the *Armonia*. He also exerted himself with success to obtain the influence of the Marchese Arconati in favour of the Visitation nuns at Arona, who were threatened with suppression. In March 1855, ill as he was, he offered his services to Mgr. Moreno to open negotiations with the Piedmontese Ministry for the withdrawal of the proposed measures, but nothing was done.

Immediately on his return from the Tyrol he set to work at the two treatises he had promised Buttaoni, the Master of the Sacred Palace; these were to be inserted as a preface to the *Essays on Moral Subjects*, and he carried them forward rapidly. The first part, in two chapters, is entitled *Rules which should be Observed by a Catholic Writer*. The second part treats of the origin and nature of original sin, its consequences and its remedy, pointing out the chief heresies against faith on these four points. Of the articles on these subjects two only were completed. But the work of greatest importance, at which he laboured most untiringly, the work which holds the first place in the Rosminian encyclopædia, is his *Theosophy*. Besides the *Categories* and *Dialectics*, which may be considered a preamble to it, and *Aristotle*, which may be called an auxiliary, we have the *Ontology* almost complete, in three large volumes—*The Divine in Nature*, *Ideal Being*, and *Real Being*—and considerable portions of *Natural Theology*, and *Cosmology*. He hesitated somewhat about publishing these works, because he saw that the world was not prepared for them, "needing milk, and as yet unable to digest solid food."

From boyhood he had had in view the establishment of a private printing-press to facilitate the diffusion of truth in the interests of charity and the public good; he intended to call it "St. Jerome's Press," after the great Saint who was such a diligent collector and commentator of the sacred text. After many ineffectual attempts to realise his plan, he obtained from the Government during these last days of his life the necessary permission. He at once set about procuring the necessary plant for printing, and drew up a set of regulations; but inexorable death prevented him from enjoying the benefit he anticipated from this undertaking.

CHAPTER XXVIII

LAST ILLNESS—DEATH AND BURIAL (1854–1855)

Father Rosmini, who was endowed with a sound and healthy constitution, possessed such full and vigorous life in his younger days that he could vividly picture to himself the joyous existence of our first parents while in the state of innocence. From the age of twenty his robust health gradually diminished owing to his intense and continued application to study, and the first symptoms of a liver complaint, which was hereditary, appeared at Milan in 1827; from that time he suffered more or less, and no treatment ever succeeded in entirely relieving him. Still, when he visited the Tyrol in August 1854, he was unusually well. At the end of September in the same year, when he was about to return to Stresa, he received an invitation to dine with a noble family at Rovereto, and he accepted the invitation of these friends with his usual affability. That evening, on his return home, he felt ill, and passed a very bad night. Next morning his sister-in-law, the Baroness Adelaide Cristani, finding that he did not as usual come down for Mass, went to see what was the cause, and found him up, trying to walk with the help of a stick. She asked how he was, and to her surprise he answered, "I am poisoned." She could not believe it, but he added, "At dinner yesterday no sooner had I taken the soup than I perceived the poison." He named the person who had brought it to him, and spoke so simply and quietly that the Baroness, thinking it a mere suspicion, never mentioned it to any one.[1] Father Rosmini said no more; he would not hear of a doctor, but treated himself as well as he could and returned to Stresa as soon as possible.

[1] The Baroness Adelaide Cristani-Rosmini died in 1906.

What are we to think of this incident? If we remember that Father Rosmini was a prudent man, by no means imaginative, and extremely reserved in his judgments, we may be sure he had good grounds for asserting that he was poisoned. If, having stated the fact to his sister-in-law, he said nothing further about it; it was, probably, because he would do what duty required for the preservation of his life by making the affair known to a discreet and prudent person; while his subsequent silence sprang from his desire to abandon himself into the hands of Providence with generous and heroic charity, rather than give rise to painful and uncertain investigations with danger to the good name of others. But was he *really* poisoned? Certain it is that he believed he was, and unhesitatingly asserted it; it is also certain that an attempt had been made to poison him two years before; it is certain, moreover, that some of his friends and some medical men suspected it without having heard a word from him: the spasms and other symptoms of his last illness confirmed their suspicions, and amongst the Roveretans the report of the poisoning spread rapidly, and was believed by many to be true. We cannot say more than this without risk of offending against truth or charity, and perhaps both the one and the other.

On his return to Stresa he was obliged to summon Dr. De Bonis, the Community doctor, who, judging that there was some obstruction of the liver and arteries, prescribed bleeding. This brought him some relief, and he was able to go about until the end of December, occupy himself with the business of the Institute, and complete the *Ontology*, which he had so much at heart. Yet labour was unusually burdensome to him, and he acknowledged that he was tired. In January 1855 his complaint grew worse, and violent internal pains, accompanied with fever, assailed him periodically, and compelled him to keep his bed. An enemy to all singularity, he would have preferred to be attended only by the ordinary doctor: but

his friends and De Bonis himself, who felt how precious was his life, contrived that other eminent physicians should visit him under colour of courtesy and friendship. In this way Drs. Tommasi and Fantonetti came to visit him from Turin, and Dr. Pogliaghi was sent by Manzoni. A change of treatment suggested by Tommasi brought the patient some relief; but this was only for a few days, after which the first treatment was resumed with a certain amount of success, so that there was some improvement in March and April, and to his great consolation he was occasionally able to say Mass.

So far the illness had been known to few, or at least it was not considered serious; but those who loved him trembled at the very thought that the danger might possibly not be remote. Some months before Manzoni had heard Rosmini remark that God cuts short the lives of great men: at these words a shudder ran through Manzoni's frame, and made him fear. Now, at the news of an improvement, his hopes revived and his heart rejoiced. Nicolò Tommaseo, who was almost blind, came from Turin to embrace the friend whom he had not seen since 1831. The joy occasioned to both of them by this meeting cannot be expressed; more than an hour was passed in intimate and affectionate intercourse. At the thought of the approach of death Father Rosmini spoke of the judgments of God with the peaceful fear of the saints. He introduced the subject advisedly, it may be, to call his friend's attention to a defect in his translation of the Psalms, for he was not pleased to find that Tommaseo had omitted certain passages which in the Jewish phrase seemed to express anger. The latter excused himself by quoting the verse, "The mercies of the Lord are above all His works"; but Rosmini replied that justice was no less a Divine attribute than mercy. Finally, he reminded him of an old recommendation of his, "Write about the immortal life of Christianity." Tommaseo thus described his visit: "After the lapse of more than a quarter of a century I saw him once again during his last

illness, before he was in immediate danger. The comparison which the mind makes after a long interval of separation from a friend, often tends to lessen esteem and affection, but in this case it did not detract from either. In the philosopher admired by the learned men of Europe, the Founder of a religious Order, a man destined for the Cardinalate, I saw still the former student of the University of Padua, the young ecclesiastic, the faithful and indulgent friend. There was the same ingenuous and innocent smile; he was cheerful under suffering, his spirit still vigorous under his prostration, and I felt the invincible youthfulness of his soul. His hair was white, less from the weight of years than from long meditation combined with afflictions of body and mind; it reminded one of the modest locks which in his youth only served to enhance the lofty serenity of his brow."

In the beginning of May the illness became more serious, and confined him to the bed from which in two months' time he was to be carried to the grave. Jaundice and many dangerous symptoms made their appearance, acute internal pains and hæmorrhage became more frequent, and the doctors were of opinion that the end was not far off. Towards the end of May there was another slight gleam of hope, but only for an instant; the fever resumed its sway, followed by loss of appetite, emaciation, hiccough, convulsions, agony, and death.

As soon as the newspapers made it public that the life of the great man was in danger, the utmost consternation prevailed, as at the approach of some great calamity. Not friends and disciples only but utter strangers made anxious inquiries, suggested remedies, and, above all, besought his cure from God with many prayers. Needless to say his children of the Institutes of Charity and of Providence were amongst the most earnest petitioners at the throne of grace. In England, by permission of the Bishops, public novenas were made, and crowds flocked to the churches where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. In many parts

of the diocese of Novara, in Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, Venice, the Tyrol, Piacenza, Tuscany, Romagna, Dalmatia, Austria, Switzerland and France, fervent prayers were offered. Numerous Masses were said by priests of their own accord, and, besides the public novenas made in many parishes, a solemn Votive Mass for the Father's recovery was sung at St. Mark's, Rovereto, by order of the town authorities. Religious communities of men and women were assiduous in their prayers during the whole period of his illness; amongst them were the Clerks Regular of St. Camillus at Verona, the Vincentian Fathers at Turin, the Franciscans at Rome, the Ursulines at Miasino and Cannobio, the Visitation Nuns at Arona, the Sacramentines at Monza, the Daughters of Charity at Brescia, the Carmelites at Carpentras; Mgr. Gentili ordered prayers in all the convents of the diocese of Novara, and Mgr. Bertolozzi in all the parishes of his diocese of Montalcino. In Rome itself Cardinals, Prelates, and Consultors of the Index, deeply moved, prayed and obtained prayers for him; and the Holy Father, grieved at the dreaded misfortune, sent the invalid his blessing with marked affection. Nor were there wanting priests who offered their lives to God in exchange for his. Their names deserve a glorious record: they were Cardinal Tosti, Moglia, Missiaglia, Father Luigi da Salo, a Capuchin, and Francesco Paoli.

Beautiful indeed was such a union of prayer and affection! Who would have thought that the hermit of Stresa, so recently rejected by the courts of princes, hated by envious men in power, sometimes regarded with suspicion even by good people, who deserted or shunned him through cowardly prudence—who would have thought that he could now move men so suddenly and so deeply? It was the homage of honest men to his virtue rather than to his genius or his learning; it was partly, too, Italy's reparation for the shameful conduct of some of her unworthy children. These demonstrations of reverence and affection were received by Father

Rosmini with humility and gratitude, still more so the charitable prayers said for him. He, too, prayed much, and with simplicity and faith applied the relics and other pious objects sent to him from various places. Twice a day the members of his household gathered round his bed, at his express desire, for prayers and exercises of piety, such was his great confidence in prayer said in common. Even when suffering most, he would not allow the devotions to be omitted or shortened; if any one expressed a fear that they would tire him, his answer was, "We can never have too much of that which helps to increase grace." He was not cured; but are we to suppose that all these prayers were in vain? Certainly not; they were answered in a more excellent way. The Christian who calls upon God for some temporal favour, must always have in view what is best; hence, if it is best for him that his request be not granted, his prayer is not lost, because it obtains from God real benefits instead of the useless or injurious things for which he asked. Father Rosmini certainly prayed for what was best; he was indifferent as to life or death, and asked not for one rather than the other, being pleased to do the Divine will, whether living or dying. His own prayers and those of others must have helped to gain him that perfect conformity to the Divine will in which the essence of sanctity consists; they must have contributed to give his soul the finishing touch which makes it unnecessary for the just to remain any longer on this earth, for it is a law of Divine wisdom that the elect should be called to their recompense as soon as the fruit is mature, according to the words of Christ on which Father Rosmini had himself commented, "And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." [1]

Let us now narrate with simplicity the most notable facts of the two short remaining months of the Father's precious life. In these events there was nothing dramatic,

[1] S. Mark iv. 29.

nothing dazzling ; but a gentle air of peace, the soft radiance of a tranquil light, the fragrance of heaven, which made Alessandro Manzoni exclaim, " Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." [1]

As the danger increased, numerous friends and disciples longed to see once more their friend and master. On the 22nd of May the Marchese di Cavour came from Turin with Professor Corte. The patient received them with his usual affability ; then turning to Corte he said, with a touch of loving reproof, " Oh, dear professor, was it necessary that I should be reduced to this state before you would come to see me ? " He then congratulated him on some recent works of his, saying that he should have liked to notice them in some paper. " But," he added, " every one knows what great friends we are." To console his friend when leaving, Father Rosmini said, " You must come again when I am better, will you not ? Then we shall be able to have a long chat about philosophy. But if it should please God to call me to Himself," and saying this he raised his eyes to heaven with a wonderful expression of heartfelt resignation, " you will certainly not forget my companions." Corte took his leave, but the Marchese remained some days with his sick friend.

On the 26th of May, the Vigil of Pentecost, he asked for writing materials, and wrote the decree nominating a Vicar-General who should govern the Institute in the event of his death, and provide for the election of the new General according to the *Constitutions*. The decree opens thus : " May the COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD shine on earth with the same glory with which it shines in heaven." The words " COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD " are written in capitals to signify the greatness of charity. Having closed it himself, he summoned the Procurator-General, Father Carlo Gilardi, and his secretary, Father Francesco Paoli, bade them seal it, and said, " I entrust this document to your safe keeping, to be placed in the archives of the

[1] Ps. cxv. 15.

General. It contains the act of nomination of the Vicar-General in the event of my death. As soon as I am gone, you will open it and send it to the person to whom it is addressed." The rest of that day he wished to spend in holy recollection to prepare for the Holy Communion, which he desired to receive the day following by way of Viaticum, though the necessity was not urgent. He chose the Feast of Pentecost, 27th May, for this solemn act, that the people might conveniently be present, and to make the more public his profession of faith.

Accordingly the Viaticum of the Body of Christ was brought to him about six o'clock in the morning from the parish church. A great concourse of clergy assisted, together with his spiritual sons and the inhabitants of Stresa, all anxious to look once more on the countenance of one whom they now so much honoured, and whom they were proud to have in their midst. He, raising himself on his bed, recited the Confiteor in clear, steady tones, then requested Father Paoli to read aloud the profession of faith, which he endeavoured to repeat aloud, word by word, until, unequal to the fatigue, he was obliged to continue in a low voice—a solemn testimony to the world of his firm adhesion to that holy religion which he had always professed by his writings, words, and works, and for which he would gladly have shed his blood. To quote a letter of Don Francesco Paoli's, "The patient desired to be left alone and undisturbed the whole day. We visited him in the evening, and he appeared to be asleep. He awoke serene and tranquil, and would by himself recite the *Te Deum* aloud. To tell you the truth, his language and manner during those days of severe illness had an air of mystery about them which I cannot attempt to describe." From that day he was able to receive his Lord more frequently even when unable to fast, and to participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, celebrated in a room adjoining his own, with infinite delight to his soul.

On the 1st of June Don Giuseppe Turri from Verona

came to Stresa. The dying Father received him affectionately, and, hearing that the principal inhabitants of St. Zeno's parish were anxious to re-establish the Institute of Charity in their midst, he said, "I have always felt that our little Institute was still cherished by the people of St. Zeno's. They are extremely well disposed. God grant that their desires may be fulfilled. Return a thousand thanks to them for all their love to me and mine. Should I never see them to thank them in person, I will pray to God for those to whom I feel myself bound by such ties of esteem and gratitude." As Turri had to leave on the morrow, he said to him, "Then thank all those good Veronese, and recommend me to their prayers. Say many kind things to the Bishop on my behalf, and, before you go, come and see me again, that I may once more express my affection for you." These words drew tears from the good priest.

Two days later, Baron Malfatti, Mayor of Rovereto, came with a letter of condolence signed by the chief citizens and the clergy. The document expressed their hopes and fears, and their united prayers that God would be pleased to prolong a life so valuable to religion, to his country, and to the world. When the mayor arrived, the sick Father was suffering so severely that he could scarcely utter a few brief words of thanks. Some hours later he revived a little, and asked to have the letter read to him, with the list of well-known and loved names. He then began to express the gratitude he felt towards his fellow-citizens, and his pleasure at finding them united, not only at this juncture, but in their efforts to secure the public good and protect religion, and to profess it without human respect, which they had done by solemnly placing the town under the protection of Mary, Help of Christians. He then requested his companions to write an answer to the letter, that he might thank them in writing more fully than he had been able to do by word of mouth.

On the 11th of June he sent for Father Bertetti, and,

having confided to him some matters which were to be communicated to the future General of the Institute, he gave him the manuscript copy of the *Constitutions*, telling him that it was the only copy which he recognised as his own, and that he wished it to be considered as authentic. He bade him, moreover, tell the new Superior, when handing it over to him, that it was necessary to keep religiously to all that was written in the *Constitutions*, so as not to alter the nature of the Institute. "It may happen," he added, "that the reason of some statute may not be perceived at once; but I assure you that I have studied each point profoundly, and with patient reflection you will be able to ascertain the reason for all." The *Constitutions*, conceived in 1825 at Rovereto and written at Calvario in 1828, amidst prayer and fasting, were the most highly prized of all his works; he would always have them by him, meditated continually on them, revised them, retouched them, improved them with unspeakable affection. And now, by handing them over to another, he seemed to resign the commission he had received from God and from His Vicar to establish the Society, which he had governed for seven-and-twenty years with more than fatherly love.

On the 13th of June Ruggero Bonghi came to visit him. The Father received him with special marks of good feeling, and after speaking on several matters said in conclusion, "Dear Bonghi, here am I between two worlds, the world of vanity and the world of truth. I shall soon appear at the tribunal of God; my entire confidence is in Him of whom it is said, *Particeps ego sum omnium timentium te*, 'I am a partaker with all them that fear Thee,'[1] and also in the merits of that great Body of which He is the head and we, the baptized, are members. Yes; all our hope is in Jesus Christ, and in our union with Him; may this also be our glory." Then, clasping his hand, he added, "Farewell, dear Bonghi, farewell." Tender words, at which the young man could not restrain his tears!

[1] Ps. cxviii. 63.

On the following day, the malady now increasing, it seemed advisable to administer Extreme Unction. Don Paolo Orsi, who some days before had come to Stresa at his friend's desire, hinted this to him. "Dearest Don Antonio, whenever you wish . . . you will let us know." The sick Father replied, "I have been thinking of it for some time: but my companions will think of it also; they will see to it. I am in their hands." Shortly after, when the secretary came in with the letters, the Father said with a smile, "Are you going to give me Extreme Unction then?" The secretary replied that it should be as he pleased, and after a few words of spiritual edification, Father Rosmini desired him to make the necessary preparations. At three in the afternoon the members of the household, together with some of the brethren from the novitiate and the College of Masters at Stresa, were kneeling round the bed, and Father Scesa, his confessor, was about to begin the solemn rite when the sufferer, watchful as ever, noticed that his friend Abate Branzini was absent, and made a sign that they should await his arrival. Soon after he came in with Ruggero Bonghi. Meanwhile Father Gilardi, as the senior of those present, asked pardon of their Father for the faults committed by himself and by his companions against him and the Institute. But the dying Father, interrupting the speaker, said, "Nay, it is I who ought to ask pardon of you and of all." "No, Father," broke in Gilardi with faltering voice, "say not so; it is I who ought—" but he could not continue, he could only weep. Father Rosmini went on to say in a clear and tranquil voice, "I ask pardon of you and of all for my faults, for not having been so gentle in correcting some of you as was due to you. I hope, however, that in this I have not sinned, for sin consists in malice and bitterness of heart, and this I know I have never felt against any one; on the contrary, I must tell you, dearest brethren, that I have always loved you with all my heart. Yet, since man is frail, and, even when he does good, often falls short in

some degree, we have always 'cause for fear and humility, for the Holy Scripture but too truly says, *Omnis homo mendax*, 'Every man is a liar.' I therefore ask pardon of you and the whole Institute, which Divine Providence has been pleased to commit to my care, for Providence is pleased to use the vilest and most despicable persons to attain its exalted ends. The Institute was my heart's treasure; perhaps I ought to have devoted to it the time I have spent in other affairs; but let us take comfort in the thought that amid so many failings the mercy of God is ever ready to pardon us, for 'if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just.' I recommend to you the spirit of prayer, union and peace amongst yourselves, which comprises every good, and above all things, obedience to your Superiors." Father Bertetti then begged him to give his blessing to those present, to the Italian province, and to the whole Institute, which he did, raising his hand and giving the blessing in the usual form.

Father Scesa then drew near to administer the sacred rite, but he had hardly begun when the sufferer requested him to proceed more slowly, either because he had a difficulty in hearing the words, or because he wished for time to dwell on their meaning. He then appeared quite satisfied, and gave himself to devout recollection while the mystic rite proceeded. Two points are worthy of note; first, that he would not have the anointing of the back omitted, seeing that the Ritual prescribes its use when it can be decorously performed; second, he reminded Father Scesa that in the case of a priest the back of the hand must be anointed, not the palm. These were proofs of the presence of mind and the religious spirit with which he entered into the most minute details of the ceremonial, upon whose venerable antiquity, majestic simplicity, and striking beauty he had in his youth commented in *Christian Education*, a work which Manzoni characterised as breathing the spirit of the first ages of faith.

When the sacred rite was concluded, amid the sobs and tears of those around, the humble Father thanked them all for their charity towards him. Father Paoli, in the name of all, thanked him for the words he had just addressed to them, and for all he had done to guide them in the way of the Lord; he promised that they would make it their duty to put his teachings into practice, and to live in the spirit of their vocation, so that he might be consoled, and the world might know by what Father they had been trained. He concluded by saying that the Father would be the glory of the sons. Father Rosmini rejoined, "Ah, yes! a great joy indeed will it be to me to see you striving after perfection: you will be a triumph for God, a triumph for me." When he had finished speaking, he closed his eyes as if to rest, and desired to be left in silence and loving contemplation until the time for evening prayer.

On June the 15th the elementary masters came from Intra to see once more their beloved Father before they were left orphans. The rector of their college brought them in; he spoke to Father Rosmini, in the name of all, of their affection which had brought them to see him, hoping to console him with the promise they laid at his feet of faithful observance of the Rule. He replied in a steady voice: "See, my dear sons, how everything passes away! Well did St. Paul say, 'The figure of this world passeth away.' The time of the harvest has come. The peasant who has laboured in the sweat of his brow is consoled when he gathers in his harvest, and so it is also with the man who serves God and labours for Him. I trust in the Lord, in Mary Immaculate, and in your holy patron, St. Joseph Calasanctius, that you will exert yourselves like good religious labourers in your charitable office. I assure you that nothing is more welcome and consoling to me, than your promise to live up to your vocation with ever-increasing fidelity. Be faithful to the Rules, then; try to penetrate their spirit, and to become daily more exact in their

observance; live according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh. I will never forget you, my dear brothers, and may the blessing I now give you be a token of this." Then, raising his hand, he blessed them.

That same evening Count Stampa arrived from Milan with the news that Manzoni would follow next day. Father Rosmini, full of joy at the anticipation of this welcome visit, could not sufficiently express his thanks to the bearer of the good news, and immediately desired his brethren to make preparations for the comfort of his beloved guest. On the 16th about noon Don Alessandro Pestalozza arrived, and about four o'clock came Manzoni with Dr. Pogliaghi. Father Paoli took the physicians, Drs. Pogliaghi and De Bonis, into the sick-room, and, when they had finished their observations, he drew near to the bed and said, "Father, Dr. Pogliaghi has brought you from Milan a better medicine still." "What!" said the invalid, his eyes lighting up with pleasure, "has Manzoni come? Why keep him waiting? Bring him in at once." The secretary went out and soon returned with Manzoni and Pestalozza. The doctors withdrew, and the two friends approached the bedside, Manzoni on the right and Pestalozza on the left. The eyes of the patient sent a glance full of life and affection towards Manzoni, who had entered first; they clasped each other's hands and gazed at one another in silence, until Manzoni exclaimed, "Oh, my dear Rosmini, how are you?" "I am in God's hands," replied the good Father, "and therefore well. But you, dear Manzoni, why have you put yourself to such inconvenience for me, and risked a journey in such bad weather, while you are still far from well yourself? I fear it will harm you." "There is nothing I would not do," rejoined his friend, "to see my dear Rosmini." "Yes indeed," said the Father, "you wished to give a proof of sincere friendship, and henceforward Manzoni will always be my Manzoni in time and in eternity." "Let us hope our Lord will leave you with us," exclaimed the great poet, "and give you time to complete the many

beautiful works you have begun; your presence amongst us is too necessary." But Father Rosmini answered: "No, no; no one is necessary to God; the works He has begun will be finished by Him with the means He has at hand, which are countless, an abyss we can gaze upon only to adore. As for me, I am absolutely useless—indeed I fear I am a hindrance; and this fear not only makes me resigned to die, but even makes me wish for death." "Ah! for heaven's sake, do not say that," was Manzoni's rejoinder. "What shall we do?" "*Adore, be silent, rejoice!*"

The scene which followed, no words can adequately describe. The dying Father, moved by an unusually affectionate impulse, clasped Manzoni's hand more earnestly, and, drawing it towards him, imprinted a kiss on it. His faithful friend, taken by surprise, with great emotion and confusion stooped to kiss Rosmini's hand, which he still held; but, suddenly reflecting, as he afterwards said, that he should be but putting himself on a level with him, he released his friend's hand, and hastened to kiss his feet, "the only way," as he explained, "the only way left him of taking his proper place." Against this Father Rosmini protested by word and sign. "Ah! you overcome me this time," were his words, "because my strength is gone," and he once more took his hand.

Our thoughts are carried back for the moment to the day when Manzoni, the Christian poet, already famous and of mature years, on meeting the young Roveretan priest for the first time, greeted him joyously with words of prophecy rather than of salutation: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things!"[1] Now, as the great Manzoni, after the lapse of thirty years, bends over the bed of his dying friend to kiss the feet which have run their course in spotless innocence, carrying wherever they trod the blessings of knowledge and love, we seem to hear the sentence repeated—a prophecy fulfilled, a predic-

[1] Rom. x. 15.

tion verified—"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things."

Meanwhile Pestalozza, who, being deeply moved at the first words of his friend, had gone out to hide his grief, came in again, and Father Paoli, presenting him, said to their Father, "See, Father, here is another Alessandro." With a smile, Father Rosmini said, "Oh! are you here, too?" and, offering him his left hand (for he still held Manzoni's with his right), he continued, "O dear and faithful friends! *O par amicorum!* what trouble you have taken on my account! And you, too," turning to Pestalozza, "have left all your work to come here, you who have suffered and are still enduring so much for my sake." He uttered these words in a feeble voice, but with intense affection, and pressed the hands of his two friends whilst he spoke, as if trying to draw them closer. On hearing that Pestalozza could stay but a short time, he asked him to promise at least that he would soon return. To this the Professor replied, "And you must promise to let me find you better." The Father rejoined, "And promise me yourself not to come too late," thus giving his friend to understand he had but a short time to live. When the interview was over the doctors found his pulse stronger; the visit of his two friends had revived him.

On the following day they both returned to the bedside of their dying friend, and he wished to talk to them on some lofty metaphysical questions regarding religion, but they, perceiving that he was very weak, begged him not to fatigue himself. He answered, "How can my two Alessandros, who are the elixir of life to me, do me any harm?" In a private conversation with Pestalozza he insisted much on the necessity of giving no quarter to *Sensism*, a pernicious error which prevents philosophy from joining hands with religion. When the Professor came to bid him farewell before his departure, he found him very much weaker. The Father at his earnest entreaty gave him his blessing;

they embraced each other, and Father Rosmini spoke these words: "Let us pray to our Lord that His holy will may be done." Pestalozza left him, promising to return, but with a sad presentiment that he should never see him again in this world. Manzoni remained to the end.

On the 17th of June the Marchese Cavour returned with his secretary, and the Father asked to see him at once. He talked with him long and intimately about the power of prayer and the enduring nature of Christian friendship. Then he went on to speak with great joy of our participation in the life of Christ, with whom we are incorporated by Baptism, and how the dissolution of the body only deprives the friend of the bodily sight of his friend, but cannot break the ties that bind together souls united in Christ, because the living members of the mystical body of Christ live one life with Him; moreover, as death draws closer and perfects the union of souls with Christ, so is it also with the souls of true friends. Whilst reasoning thus, the holy man grew more and more fervent; his words seemed almost inspired, diffusing in the heart of the Marchese an ineffable sweetness, mingled with the sad feeling that these were the last words he should hear from the lips of this great man. He could not restrain his tears on taking leave, but he had no sooner reached the foot of the staircase than his affection moved him to return once more and ask the blessing of his dying friend. Father Rosmini gave it him, promising that their friendship should be perpetuated in heaven, and so he went away consoled.

Paravia arrived from Turin on the 19th of June; his duties as a professor at the university did not allow of his coming earlier. Father Rosmini welcomed him with great joy, and after speaking to him for a long time on science, letters, and art; about Turin, Padua, and Arqua, he urged him to continue his present work of instilling into the young an enlightened love for the religion of Christ, without which, mental culture leaves their education not only stunted, but vitiated.

The day following, several priests, acquaintances of Father Rosmini, came from both sides of the lake, in order to show their veneration for one whom they considered the ornament of the Christian priesthood. He received them with humble and affectionate gratitude, and they left with a profound impression of the holy and lovable nature of the Father they had come to venerate for the last time. On the same day he was gladdened by the news from Rome that the Holy Father sent him the Apostolic Benediction, and was grieved to hear of his illness.

Here let us pause for a while to gaze on the man of God as he lies on his bed of suffering, the slow fire of tribulation purifying his soul for heaven. Given up by the doctors, and knowing that his days were numbered, he conversed with them of his illness, its treatment, and the results as calmly and peacefully as if another's life were in question. Then, rising on the wings of faith, he would remark that in any case the loving designs of Providence would be accomplished, and that on them depend all secondary causes, such as the powers of nature, and of medicine and their effects, the skill or incompetence of doctors: in these thoughts he found tranquil repose. At times he would philosophise about his sufferings with the spirit of an ascetic and a physiologist combined. "It is not we ourselves who suffer," he said to Father Paoli, "but the body, our outer covering, that suffers." Another time he spoke of the strange phenomena he observed, such as the sensation of being two or three persons at a time—alluding, no doubt, to the sensitive life, animal life, and rational life, which he seemed to distinguish almost as clearly as if they existed separately; adding that, if he had not had more important matters to reflect upon, it would have been a delightful and interesting psychological study to reflect upon the condition of the soul in time of sickness. Again, returning to a thought which was very familiar to him, that the goodness of God towards His creatures is more

abundant in their greatest needs, he spoke of death as a subject for poetry of a deeply religious kind. "It would be a beautiful theme," he said to his faithful Paoli, "to magnify the Divine bounty, and show how it seeks to make man's death less painful, nay, even sweet, by affording him at that moment comfort and help of all kinds from nature, art, and grace. There are friends, doctors, nurses, variety of food and medicine, words of consolation, grounds of hope, examples of noble deaths, the succour of religion, &c. It is a subject which should be dealt with by a master-hand; there is no lack of matter, but the form would have to be studied." He would have liked it to be modelled upon Horace amongst ancient writers, and Mascheroni amongst modern writers, both masters of a concise and impressive style. Thus even to the end we see him, with the instinct of true virtue, coupling beauty with goodness, science with poetry, pure consolation with pure suffering.

No complaint escaped him amidst his most acute pains; one would have thought him free from pain, though his suffering was intense. The anguish caused him by his fellow-men, and the recollection of its authors, seemed to have utterly passed from his memory. There was always a smile upon his lips, and the ready reply to any inquiry about his health was, "Well; as the good God wills." When any one expressed compassion, he would say, "Oh! this is nothing to what our Lord suffered." One day, when his sons were supporting him in a half-fainting condition, seeing him smile, they looked at him with compassionate wonder, which he perceived and said, "What! would you wish me to weep?" Once, when Father Paoli thought he would be afflicted at the state of public affairs, and was trying to console him, he said, "I am not grieving, my dear brother; you must not trouble about me." Father Paoli remarking that if news were received of the Czar's conversion it would quite revive him, the Father exclaimed, "I should be out of bed in an instant," at which he blushed next moment, so delicate was his sense of propriety when he saw that a

sudden impulse had made him speak thus. Having no anxiety about himself, he obeyed the doctors, the infirmarians, and those about him with the simplicity of a child in all that regarded his health; in spiritual matters he followed the guidance of his confessor, a man of very moderate intelligence and culture, but remarkable for piety and charming simplicity. Father Rosmini's anxiety was all for others; he inquired with great concern about the health of those who came to see him, and would not allow them to remain standing by his bedside; he would ask particularly that guests should be treated with great attention, and never failed to inquire of them if there was anything they needed. He liked to have each day's correspondence promptly answered, and up to the eve of his death had the post brought to him punctually. Once when Father Paoli delayed it until the arrival of a second post, the Father, with mingled affection and firmness, pointed out his fault, saying, "In matters of obedience I do not like interpretations." He consoled with holy words the friends and spiritual children who, full of anguish at the prospect of losing him, surrounded his deathbed. "Let us do the will of God," he said to one of his secretaries, "and banish fear. He who is united with Jesus Christ must be content with everything. Impress deeply on your minds the words of Christ, *Ego sum resurrectio et vita*, 'I am the resurrection and the life.'"[1] To Father De Vit, who begged that he would be mindful of him in heaven, he replied, "When it pleases God to let me be united to my last end, be sure that I will remember you in eternity: meanwhile let us sympathise with each other and do you pray for me."

He never showed the least sign of anxiety, either concerning the many valuable writings he left, or the Institute which was so dear to him. From a human point of view, no doubt, such solicitude would have seemed prudent, but the man of God viewed things differently. He was a man

[1] St. John xi. 25.

of pure and simple faith, and, having abandoned himself wholly to the Providence of his Heavenly Father, he would have thought it an act of distrust to rely on short-sighted and fallacious human plans. "Have no doubts," he said to Father Puecher, who was, he felt sure, trembling for the future of the Institute; "let us work valiantly and faithfully at the practice of the perfect life which Jesus Christ has taught us, and you will see that after my death things will go on better than before." In the same way he encouraged Sister Giovanna Antonietti, Superior of the Sisters of Providence. Seeing her full of fear and discouragement, he said: "Fear not, my daughter, fear not; we are separated but for a moment; in spirit, we shall always be united. In times such as these I could do little good for your Institute by living on, and perhaps I should be a hindrance to that little good, whereas from heaven I shall be better able to help you, and I shall certainly do so with the good God. Have faith in Him: the Institute being His work, He will continue to maintain it. But hold this for certain, that the Sisters of Providence will flourish in proportion to their fidelity in preserving the spirit of poverty and simplicity." These words of the good Father have been and are still being verified.

The virtue that shone most conspicuously in our beloved Father was his complete conformity of mind and heart to the Divine will, and this made even death dear to him, because it was willed by God. When Father Scesa, his confessor, told him that many were calling upon God with the words of the sisters of Lazarus, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick," "Oh! how good God is," he replied, raising his eyes to heaven in thanksgiving; "how good God is! He loves even sinners. But let us pray for eternal life; my bodily life is beyond remedy." Then, turning to higher considerations, he went on to say that creatures bear a certain image or impress of the Trinity, and that it is necessary for the sinner to pass through death to render this likeness perfect. To those who reminded him that

more than one life had been offered in exchange for his, he replied that he appreciated the affection of his friends, but not the gift. But, when asked to unite with others in praying for the preservation of his life, he answered: "God forbid that I should do such a thing! I wish for nothing but what is pleasing to my God." As his end drew near, the intensity of his sufferings seemed only to make thought and affection more serene, and the soul sent forth rays of purer light as its frail covering, the body, faded away.

To resume the thread of our narrative. On the 23rd of June the novices came, accompanied by the Master of Novices. The Father was so exhausted that he could not address them; however, with the assistance of the priest who was by his side, and raised him on his pillows, he put out his hand and blessed them, saying with feeble voice, *Per merita Beatæ Mariæ Virginis et omnium Sanctorum perducat nos Dominus ad regna cælorum*, "Through the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the Saints may our Lord bring us to the kingdom of heaven," as if to say, "Nothing now remains for me, but to ask from God the kingdom of heaven."

On the 24th Tommaseo came for the second time, just as the community were assembling round the sick bed for evening prayer. Father Rosmini, hearing of his arrival, said, "Let him come, let him come, and all the others as well." Father Paoli led in the visitor, who was nearly blind, and Father Rosmini, throwing his weak arms around his friend's neck, drew him towards him with unusual affection, saying, "The doctor allows me to see none but my dearest friends." Tommaseo burst into tears and kissed his good Father again and again. Then after the Community had recited the usual prayers, Father Rosmini thanked them, and spoke of the consolation he received from so many prayers said in common; because, on account of the Communion of Saints, such prayers have great power with God. Next morning, after a private conversation with Manzoni, he asked to see Tommaseo once more. The latter entered

and threw himself upon his neck; then in a voice choked with emotion, he begged the Father to give him a final blessing, and knelt down to receive it. At first Father Rosmini demurred, saying gently, "God will bless you; endeavour to be faithful to Him, and keep the great affairs of the soul always present to you: the soul saved, all is saved." But, as he still knelt and persisted in his request, the Father blessed him, and Tommaseo, kissing his hand, rose to depart, bearing in his heart his words of holy counsel, "Let us attend to the salvation of our souls."

That day, feeling extremely exhausted, he said it was time to think of making the last recommendation of his soul, and strengthening him with the blessing *In articulo mortis*. This he said with his usual serenity, like a man who from frequent reflection on death is well prepared to die, or rather like one to whom life and death are equally welcome, because he knows by faith that "whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's." The week before he had alluded to the approach of death in words of sublime Christian feeling: "The first part of my life is drawing to a close." Now that he was unable to take either food or medicine, and his breathing had become most difficult, and his strength almost spent, the end seemed close at hand, but it was not so. His strong constitution, and the profound peace of his soul, were to resist dissolution for yet six days, and his agony was to be the more protracted on account of his extraordinary vitality.

On the 28th he received a very welcome visit from Father Piantoni, a Barnabite, the Rector of the Longone College at Milan. This excellent religious, at the dying Father's own request, blessed him with a relic of the Venerable Antony Zaccaria, the founder of his Order. He assured them that he and the other members of his Order were praying for his restoration to health; adding that, if it should please God to call him, he might console himself with the words of St. Paul, "I have fought a good fight; for the rest there is laid up for me a crown of glory." He

then asked for a spiritual memento. Father Rosmini replied: "I am very grateful to you and to the whole of your Congregation for the prayers offered for me. Continue to pray, dear Father, that the Divine will may be done in me, whatever it may be. The words of St. Paul are imprinted on my heart, but all my hope is in the merits of Jesus Christ. As for the memento," saying this, he took the priest's hand, and placed it on his heart, "it shall be for us both. May God be always present to us, for all the rest is nothing." Many times did the good Barnabite come back to the sick room, and when he heard the humble and affectionate words of the great man of God, as he called him, witnessed his wonderful patience, his joyfulness in suffering, his beaming looks towards heaven, and the fervour with which he received our Lord in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, his thoughts reverted to the marks set down by Benedict XIV. as characteristic of the death of a saint, all of which seemed to him quite apparent in the dying priest before him.

We will here draw attention to what may have already struck some of our readers—the simplicity, that mark of true greatness, with which Father Rosmini approached his end. No word or act of his displayed his mighty genius, the depth of his learning, or the singular gifts of his soul. His last words to his friends were remarkable for their simplicity: "Let us think of saving our souls; let God be always present to us; let us seek after perfection." With the same simplicity he obeyed doctors and infirmarians as to his bodily welfare, and followed the spiritual advice of his confessor like any ordinary Christian, without disquiet about the past, anxiety as to the present, or fear for the future.

The last two days of his life brought him consolation in the visits of two venerable prelates. On the 29th of June, Mgr. Gentile, Bishop of Novara, came to see him, and offered his apologies for having delayed so long, saying that serious illness had prevented him from coming; he

assured the Father that he had ordered prayers for him in all the religious houses of the diocese. Father Rosmini, although reduced to the last stage of weakness, expressed his humble thanks, and his regret that the Bishop would not stay to have some refreshment; then, recommending himself to his lordship's prayers for the last great passage, he asked his blessing. It was on this day, the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, that he received the Holy Viaticum for the last time.

On the 30th he had several painful fainting fits; his speech became more and more indistinct; while the languid eye, the difficulty of hearing, the smile dying away on his lips, all told that the end was near. On this day the tender love of God was pleased to afford him an unexpected consolation in the visit of Mgr. Moreno, Bishop of Ivrea, a prelate who considered it an honour to be Rosmini's friend. When the Bishop arrived about two o'clock in the afternoon, the dying Father was in a sort of stupor or lethargy, and it was doubtful whether he would be able to recognise his illustrious visitor; still, on the name being repeated several times by his secretary, he roused himself a little, and made a sign that he understood. His lordship entered, followed by Manzoni and several others, and at the first sight of his friend, now struggling with death, he was deeply moved; then, bending over him, he spoke as follows in accents of veneration and affection: "I have come to thank your Paternity for all you have done for me, for my clergy, and for the Church. I have been your spiritual son, like many of my priests, when you came to give us the spiritual exercises in my diocese. You have laboured long and courageously for the good of religion, and in defence of the rights of the Church; it was then but right that I should come to thank you for all your holy labours on our behalf." Beautiful it was to see a Bishop bending down in the name of the Church to thank the lowly priest who had dedicated himself and all he had to the cause of religion and truth. At the words

of Mgr. Moreno our Father stretched out his hand, and endeavoured by looks and signs to express his gratitude and his confusion at the words of the good prelate, who added, "I entreat your Paternity to remember us in Paradise, to pray for me, for my diocese, and for the Church in Piedmont." At these words the sick Father, with a supreme effort, spoke again, and in the feeblest of tones, expressive of deep humility, said, "I am covered with confusion, I am covered with confusion." The Bishop still urging his request, he answered by word and sign, "I will do so, I will do so." On the Bishop's assuring him that he would not cease to pray and obtain prayers for him at that solemn moment, he said repeatedly, "Thanks, thanks." These were the last clear and intelligible words spoken by him, if we except a faint *Addio* to Manzoni, and a short ejaculation suggested to him by one of his sons.

Soon after three o'clock Mgr. Moreno blessed the dying Father and all those present, and took his departure. Then the eyes of the dear patient grew dim, the smile disappeared, the sense of feeling became dull, and the spasms more violent; it was his agony. About five o'clock the Community assembled round him, and with them Manzoni, to recite the recommendation of the departing soul according to the ritual, and the priest imparted the blessing *In articulo mortis*. At the same time the religious in the College assembled to pray for their dying Father; the people of the neighbourhood, summoned by the mournful tolling of the bell, hastened to the parish church, where the archpriest opened the tabernacle, and recited the prayers for the agonising. The agony was long and painful; for eight hours loud and lamentable groans were wrung from the suffering frame; they sounded like the words, *Dio eterno! Dio eterno!* It was the last purification, thanks to which the pilgrim soul was freed from every trace of human frailty, that it might the more rapidly

> "To the God of Saints ascend,
> Hallowed in its suffering."

Where was the great soul of Antonio Rosmini in those hours of torture? It does not appear that he was entirely unconscious; a proof of this is that the prayers said round his bed seemed to calm his agitation; perhaps, too, his refusal of the opiated wine, and his sucking the bitter liquid given to moisten his lips, were movements of the will, rather than mere instinct. But God permitted that he should not retain the full power of reflection or that complete mastery of the spirit over the animal nature which had formerly controlled his slightest movements, in order to reveal to us how terrible had been the sufferings of his long illness, and how great the strength of soul which had enabled him to hide them under such unalterable cheerfulness of mien.

Night fell, and after the Community with the guests had recited some prayers, the secretary begged them to retire to rest, promising to call them should the Father recover the use of his senses and his speech; he himself, with Paolo Zamboni, who took the place of Antonio Carli, the ordinary infirmarian, remained. This good lay-brother, who had with the devotedness of a son rendered his beloved Father every service during his illness, now that he saw him in combat with death, left his side for the first time; his affectionate heart could not endure to see him die in his arms, and he felt that his work was at an end. Father Paoli and Brother Zamboni therefore remained at his side, unable to afford him any relief except raising the convulsed arms and from time to time moistening the parched lips, while they offered up earnest prayers for him. The sweet song of a nightingale in the adjoining garden was heard during these hours of agony and ceased at the Father's death. "From time to time he stretched out his arms in the form of a cross, and it seemed to me," wrote Father Paoli to his absent brethren, "that the Passion of our Lord was represented in His servant as we moistened his lips with a sponge dipped in an acid mixture. I remembered, too, that on the 29th of June the doctor had

prescribed for him medicated wine mingled with gall, which, when he had tasted, he would not drink. At last about midnight, while we were praying, the dying Father became quiet; I called Dr. De Bonis, who came in a few minutes with Father De Vit and Count Stampa: we saw him modestly compose himself, as if it were for death, and then tranquilly expire."

Antonio Rosmini was born on a Friday, the day dedicated to the Passion of our Lord, and he died at half-past one o'clock on the morning of the 1st of July, a day on which the diocese of Novara celebrated the Feast of the Precious Blood of our Saviour. From youth upwards he had always been singularly devout to the Precious Blood, which he daily offered to God in union with his own blood in the Mass. The first houses of the Institute he had dedicated to Jesus Christ Crucified, and, the Institute itself being founded on Calvario, at the foot of the Cross, he may be said to have lived on Calvary. His age was fifty-eight years, three months, and seven days; it was twenty-seven years from the foundation of the Order, fifteen from its approval by the Holy See, and nearly a year since Rome had, by a solemn decree, declared the works of its Founder free from all the accusations brought against them.

The body lay undisturbed all day in the same room, and in the composed and devout attitude he had assumed before death. His sons came in turn to recite beside him the prayers for the dead with a grief that may easily be imagined, but it was a grief tempered by a secret sweetness, almost joy, one might say, such as is felt at the death of the saints. Many, too, came from outside to gaze for the last time on the features of the great man, rendered still more venerable by the traces of suffering, and to offer their prayers by his side. Young Ruggero Bonghi, one of these visitors, was observed to kiss the hand of his benefactor with great emotion and gratitude. Manzoni seemed unable to tear himself away from what remained of his friend here

below. "Ah! dear Rosmini, my Rosmini," he repeated with deep affection, stretching out his hand towards the lifeless corpse as if he longed to reanimate it with his own life. When he entered the room next morning and found it empty, the remains having been taken elsewhere in preparation for burial, he looked round at the few poor objects in the room as if he were seeking his friend in them; and, chancing to light on Dante's *Paradiso*, he gazed on it intently, and kissed it with a tenderness and reverence not to be described. Being requested to take anything he liked as a memento, he replied, "The memento is here," placing his hand on his forehead; then, placing it on his heart, he repeated, "The memento is here." At last, he leaned over the side of the empty bed and remained there a long time, as if he were trying to realise the words of his friend—"*Adore, be silent, rejoice.*"

On the 3rd of July the funeral obsequies were celebrated in the parish church of Stresa, without pomp, but with all the solemnity possible in that retired spot. The clergy of Stresa and of the neighbourhood attended with Father Rosmini's own sons, and a large concourse of people assembled from the country round. Following the bier, praying sorrowfully, came Don Paolo Orsi and a number of priests, friends of Rosmini, who joined in of their own accord, Doctors De Bonis and Preialmini, Count Stampa, and Manzoni. Mass over, Father Puecher delivered a short discourse, not so much a eulogium of the deceased, as an expression of the deep emotion which filled the hearts of all. When the Absolutions were finished, the funeral cortège wended its way, all reciting the psalms in a low voice, to the Church of Jesus Crucified on the hill where stood the novitiate; here the venerated remains, enclosed in a leaden coffin, within an outer one of wood, were laid in a humble grave until a more fitting burial-place was prepared.

At the news of Father Rosmini's death—anger being forgotten for the moment—it may truly be said that the grief was universal. In a short work of this kind one

cannot enumerate all the writings in prose and in verse which commemorated and honoured the departed, nor the prayers and suffrages offered for his soul by the members of the Institute and by private persons. We will only mention the solemn Requiems at Casale, Mgr. Calabiana being present; at Turin, where Mgr. Moreno pontificated; at Rovereto, the Vicar-General representing Mgr. Schiderer; at Parabiago in Lombardy, at Cavour, and at Argentera in Piedmont. Many persons begged earnestly for a souvenir of their saintly friend—his autograph, a portion of his habit, his hair, anything that he had used. Amongst these were Cardinal Tosti, Don Paolo Barola, Don Orsi, and many other priests as well as secular persons, Professor Paganini, Baroness Koenneritz, Count Stampa, &c.

Later on statues were erected in various places to perpetuate his memory. The monuments at Stresa and Rovereto were of marble, Milan erected a bronze statue, and he was honoured in other places by busts.

But a monument more enduring than bronze or stone was the one raised by his own works of sublime virtue, which neither death, nor time, nor the forgetfulness, ingratitude, or envy of men can ever destroy.

CHAPTER XXIX

VIRTUES OF ANTONIO ROSMINI

In this chapter the reader will find many interesting facts concerning Father Rosmini, which could not well have been set down in their chronological order, and are therefore arranged according to the special virtues upon which they touch; the theological virtues holding the first place on account of their sublime object, then the cardinal virtues and all those which are derived from them. With the sayings and doings of Father Rosmini related here, on the authority of eye-witnesses, we have interwoven some sentences and maxims from his works, in illustration of the complete harmony between the man and the writer; for to Antonio Rosmini we may well apply the words of Ennodius regarding St. Ephrem: "Every page he wrote was descriptive of his own life." The last chapters portray Antonio Rosmini in his daily life and conversation, thus adding a few touches to render this sketch of his great figure less incomplete.

I. Theological Virtues

Faith.—Faith is the root from which all the Christian virtues germinate; and in Father Rosmini, who was before all things a man of faith, it was the source and cause of his real greatness.

In a spirit of profound gratitude to God for this gift bestowed on him in Baptism, he used to call it the *treasure of his heart.* Year by year he celebrated the anniversary of his Baptism with great joy; he urged others to commemorate annually their reception of the great Sacrament, and

suggested the Canticle of the Israelites after the passage of the Red Sea as an appropriate thanksgiving: "Let us sing to the Lord: for He is gloriously magnified."[1] His first act on awaking in the morning was to recite the *Credo* as though to re-animate his faith, and begin the day under its guidance; and one of his favourite ejaculations was a prayer for faith: "Give me the faith of God! Give me the faith of God!" Faith was to be the inspiration, the companion, and the guide of all his actions; hence those maxims of his "to walk in the light; to direct all the actions of one's life with the spirit of intelligence," that is to say, according to the dictates of reason enlightened by faith.

The obscurity of faith, so full of confusion and terror to the proud, was to the pure and simple soul of Father Rosmini a pillar of light revealing to him the mysteries of the Divinity and of nature, and the obscure problems of this present life. Accustomed from his earliest years to discern the traces of the Divine beauty in creation, Antonio Rosmini as a youth had longed to pen a suitable hymn to the Creator, but never found words adequate to express his ideas. The visible world, which entirely engrosses the earthly-minded man, was to him the ascent to loving contemplation of the invisible; the wide expanse of earth and sky, the forest trembling in the breeze, the murmur of the brook, the song of the nightingale in the dead of night, all served to raise his soul to God in prayer. There was no created thing, however lowly, that did not help to unite him with God. "Think it over," he suddenly said one day to Father Signini, "and you will find that the likeness or impress of the Holy Trinity is to be found in all things, even to a grain of sand!" Still more easily did he rise from natural truths

"To that lofty light which in itself is true."

Thus it often happened that, when reasoning on the harmony between natural and revealed truths, he would thence

[1] Exod. xv. 1.

draw stronger proofs of the credibility of faith, and, gazing reverently on the veil of mystery, perceive rays of bright light which rendered its darkness less impenetrable. "I formulated my theory of bodies," he said on another occasion to Father Signini, "by close study of them, without any thought of the mystery of the Eucharist; but to my surprise and delight I afterwards discovered that my theory was quite in accordance with that mystery, and in part explained it to me. Mind, there is always mystery; but for me it lies deeper than for most men."

Thus it was that, all truths being linked together, his strong adhesion to the truths of faith enabled his mind to rise on powerful pinions to the loftiest heights of natural truths, and ponder them in perfect security. For my own part I think that his mind would never have succeeded in grasping the nature of Being, or discovering its unity of essence in trinity of form, had he not been helped and supported in his arduous task by a firm faith in the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. In him the lofty speculation of the philosopher was wedded to the simple faith of a child; each was of advantage to the other, reason rendering homage to faith—*rationabile obsequium*—faith opening up new paths to reason.

St. Paul gives the name of *sensum Christi*[1] to the new sense infused into us by faith in Holy Baptism, because it enables us to perceive and relish those things that are of God and His Christ. This sense—"mind of Christ"—which is strong and excellent in proportion to our faith, was so great in Father Rosmini's soul as to make anything that was not seasoned with this Christian savour insipid and nauseous to him. Science, letters, art, education, politics, ethics, everything in fact, he wished to see renewed and ennobled by Christianity. Whatever was devoid of this Christian element appeared to him miserable and defective. He could not pardon Taverna for the absence of any trace of the supernatural in his elegant and polished compositions, and in

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 16.

order to point this out to him he wrote his *Essay on the Idyll.* After reading Cantù's *Introduction to Universal History*, he pointed out to him as a friend, that he had spoken of Christianity from too human a point of view, and had not openly ascribed to the grace of Christ its full share in the regeneration of the world. Pallavicini having sent him his *Manual of Teaching* to look through, he frankly but respectfully expressed his regret that more stress had not been laid on the principle that "the scope of education as an art should be the perfection of man; not merely in the natural order, but as a supernatural being and a Christian." To Father Piantoni, who asked him how he should guide a young pupil of his entering into the mazes of history, Father Rosmini's suggestion was "to look upon the whole course of events as directed by a ruling Providence, which employs them all for the triumph of Jesus Christ, the advancement of the Church, and the salvation of the elect." On his own part, to make Jesus Christ known to men was the object of his works—not only his theological, ascetic, and moral writings, but also those which are purely metaphysical; and more than one of his readers, moved by the spirit of faith so evident in them, felt the clouds of infidelity cleared from his mind, and the light of God once more illuminating his soul.

Faith produces reverence for Divine things. Elevated and sublime was Father Rosmini's idea of God; he would often say, "Let us conceive a *grand* idea of God;" and for this reason he did not like the Divine attributes to be considered too much apart from each other, lest exalting one, we should overlook another. He would speak of the mercy of God in terms that thrilled the heart with joy, but when speaking of the justice of God, he could strike terror into his hearers. As a child he used to write the name of God at the beginning of his exercise-books; it was his custom to write it in large letters as a mark of respect, and he could never bear to hear it used lightly or in jest. When he was sixteen, having noticed that a friend of his

had written *Per Dio* in his letter as an exclamation, young Antonio gently chid him in his reply: "This fashion of saying *Per Dio* is painful to me, however apt it may seem. The Hebrews had a name for God, but they did not even dare to utter the word, far less to profane it."

His reverence for God extended to the persons and things consecrated to the Divine service. All the ministers of the Lord were venerated by him, from the Pope down to the humblest priest; and he particularly delighted in paying respect to newly-ordained priests by kissing their hands. He would always treat parish priests with singular deference, and although he was Superior-General and Founder of an Order he yielded them the place of honour and paid them other marks of respect, as the principal dispensers of the sacred mysteries and Christ's co-operators in the care of souls. On the same grounds he sometimes served his own priests at table on their return from the missions. Those who were in the lower grades of the ministry were honoured by him beyond what is customary; he has left it written in the *Constitutions* that the masters, catechists, and sacristans who had given proof of pious diligence in their duties might, at the discretion of the General, be promoted to the tonsure and the minor orders as a reward, and for an increase of grace. Whilst he never signed himself Count or Cavalier as he might have done, or Member of any of the Academies which gloried in having enrolled him in their list; yet, as a youth, he loved to add the title of *cleric*, *acolyte*, *deacon*, and finally *priest;* and in maturer years, when his fame was at its height, no title seemed to him better suited to adorn the immortal volumes he produced, than the sublime and lowly appellation of "priest of Rovereto." In the domestic arrangements of the Communities he would have no attention paid to human and worldly position; the Superiors, as representatives of God, were to hold the first place; then priests and clerics, according to the Orders they had received; then lay-brothers according to seniority, not reckoning from the

date of birth, but the date of Baptism, out of respect for the Christian character.

One of his clerics having kissed Count Mellerio's hand in his presence, he afterwards corrected him for the act when they were alone; telling him it was not becoming in a cleric towards a secular, however worthy the latter might be.

He had a reverent love for everything connected with the worship of God. Some of the finest passages in his work on Christian education treat of the ceremonies used in Divine worship, and serve to make one relish their spiritual beauty. When a boy he invited one of his friends to come to the Rogation procession with him, and was delighted to feel that they were united in conversing with God, in whom alone friendship is truly sweet and beautiful. As a priest he applied himself to celebrate sacred functions with exactitude and decorum; he always prepared himself beforehand, and would seek information from any one who was well informed, so as to be quite sure of the rubrics. He was not a good singer, and being fully aware of his deficiencies, he took lessons from those who were masters of the art, and his satisfaction was visible in his countenance when he succeeded in chanting tolerably well. During the retreat in 1836, he wrote the following resolution in his diary: "I will try to become better versed in the sacred ceremonies, and will look carefully at the Missal and the Calendar before saying Mass in order to avoid mistakes. No studies shall be allowed to hinder this." Such was the importance he attached to everything regarding the worship of God. After his death, the Roveretans who knew him as a child, often called to mind how he used to kneel to pray outside the church of Loreto on his way back from school; and, when a cleric, was to be seen at the offices of the Church in St. Mark's, his whole demeanour breathing piety. His sons would recall the attitude of profound meditation in which their Father knelt in a side chapel during the long ceremony of the consecration of the Church of the Novitiate—a remarkable circumstance, which so

struck Mgr. Gentile, the consecrating Bishop, that he could not refrain from glancing towards him now and then with feelings of wonder and of pious delight. Bonghi bears witness to Father Rosmini's joy, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, at the mere thought of joining in the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, carrying his candle amongst the poor peasants. All who ever saw him at the altar testified to the intense recollection and extraordinary fervour with which he celebrated Holy Mass. As we shall have more to say on this subject, I will only remark here that he was so evidently the man of faith in all these actions that, according to Father Signini, "to see him genuflect would be sufficient to convert one who had no faith in the august mystery;" or, as another witness declares, "the very sight of him compelled one to believe in the presence of Jesus Christ." Father Rosmini, however, made no display of his faith by way of show or through excessive zeal, but, when occasion offered, he professed it freely and simply; indeed, his heart was so filled with faith that it could not but shine in all his actions, hence it often happened that persons on coming into his presence felt all unworthy thoughts vanish, and recognised in him the man of God, the saint.

Much more might be said on this subject, but as hope, charity, and all other Christian virtues have faith for their foundation, what we shall say on his other virtues will still further illustrate his faith.

HOPE.—Faith produces Hope. As the object of faith is a truth which we cannot comprehend in this life, so the object of hope is a good not yet possessed by us; but as both are founded on God, who is true and faithful, the Christian can be certain in his faith and secure in his hope, and he may exclaim with the Apostle, "I know whom I have believed, and I am certain . . ."[1] "and hope confoundeth not."[2]

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 12. [2] Rom. v. 5.

Such was Father Rosmini's hope, a virtue founded entirely on boundless confidence in the Providence of his Heavenly Father, which directs and governs everything by laws of ineffable wisdom and love. He was accustomed from his earliest youth to see the guiding hand of the Creator in everything in the material world, down to the smallest atom. The following beautiful sentence is to be found in his book of *Thoughts*: "God has provided in creation that all natural events should, for His great ends, be linked together by an unbreakable chain; the greatest occurrences are bound up with the least; the falling of a leaf is no less important than the course of the sun." Still more striking to him was the evidence of God's power in the moral world. The discord which scandalises men of little faith, his soul reduced to harmony by the consideration of the good which Divine wisdom will draw from the evil it permits, just as a skilful musician will enjoy a passage that sounds discordant to the unpractised ear, because he knows how the beauty of the final close is enhanced by the discords which are resolved in it. One of his first philosophical writings was an *Essay on Providence*, a prelude to the *Theodicy*, in which it was included later on. This kind of study was to him the most delightful of tasks; and once, when engaged on the third book of the *Theodicy*—wonderful for its original and sublime thoughts—he exclaimed to Father Signini: "How beautiful this subject is! It would supply matter for thirty books; but time is short, and I must be brief." On another occasion, reflecting how prone man is to complain of the many evils which afflict the world, he broke out into these words, worthy of a commentary: "There are three shortcomings which make us poor mortals take distorted views of God's Providence: *short life, short sight, short patience.*"

The occupation of heart and mind on these studies regarding Divine Providence rendered still firmer his confidence in God, and gave wings to his hope.

The first effect of this confidence was an entire abandon-

ment of himself into God's hands, which seemed habitual, almost natural, to him. Of his six *Maxims of Christian Perfection*, he has developed and drawn out with greatest care the fourth, entitled: "To abandon ourselves entirely to Divine Providence." This principle he endeavoured to impress both on himself and others as the surest way of obtaining peace of heart and equability of life; and he was careful to regulate his own life by it, living, as he expressed it, *in the present*, without indulging in any anxiety about himself or his affairs. When he had accomplished what he conscientiously believed to be his duty, he would wait tranquilly, expecting the result of his labours from God, who alone knows the times and the moments which He keeps in His own power. He was never known to put his doctrines forward, or to seek for followers; he wrote under the conviction that God willed him to do so, and left it to the Divine goodness to spread the truth, and make it triumphant in due time. Even in his prayers, he loved to cast himself on the bounty of God rather than specify his request, as we see from some of his favourite ejaculations: "Give me what Thou knowest I need." "Pour out according to the greatness of Thy heart." "I ask Thee for good; the good Thou knowest, not that which seems good to me." "I ask Thee for that which the Heart of Jesus desires me to ask."

He acted in the same way with regard to the Institute, which was so dear to him. The Providence of our Heavenly Father was to be its only foundation, and he declared that to give it any other would be to work its ruin. Hence, he was not in haste to make it known, much less to extend it. "You must have a profound conviction of mind," he wrote to Father Gentili, when he was sending him to England, "that the Institute is not to aim at spreading itself, nor at bringing itself into notice; on the contrary, we must remain hidden as far as possible. So you must be on your guard, and not even name the Institute without necessity or reasonable cause." Father Rosmini himself had a positive

dread of inducing persons to enter his Society, or even attracting them to it. Those who came of their own accord, he welcomed as sent by God, using the words of Christ, "Him that cometh to me I will not cast out;"[1] but he went no further. "I cannot call you," he wrote to a priest, who was longing for a word from him, "I cannot call you, for I myself need to be called." At another time he writes: "Jesus Christ might indeed say to this one or that, 'Come follow *Me*,' for 'He knew what was in man;' but none of us can speak thus." Father Pagani, afterwards General of the Order, was Director of the Seminary at Novara when he first met Father Rosmini, and in that position he might easily have sent the Institute of Charity some good subjects. Observing, however, that the Founder made no mention of his rising Institute during the whole of their conversation, he conceived a high esteem for him, as a man utterly detached from self and self-interest, and entirely devoted to God. On the rare occasions when some members of the Institute departed from these principles, Father Rosmini was deeply grieved. When, for instance, Father Lowenbruck went to Turin to recommend the Institute to the Cabinet Minister, he expressed his displeasure strongly. "The method you are adopting," he wrote, "is not the way to establish the Society, but to destroy it." And again, when the same Father had hastily sent three Sisters of Providence quite unprepared to the Marquis Barola, he expressed the deepest regret, severely reproved Father Gentili for having counselled such a step, and imposed on him a severe penance for doing so. Father Alvazzi also, who had agreed with Father Lowenbruck to try and get the Sisters established at Varzo, was in like manner severely rebuked. These human contrivances seemed to him a want of confidence in Divine Providence, to whom he wished his children to abandon themselves without reserve, according to the sentence of Holy Scripture, *Sustine Dominum*. "We must not expect," he said

[1] St. John vi. 37.

to them, "that Providence should adopt our pace; let the words of Ecclesiasticus be our motto, 'Humble thyself to God, and wait for His hands.'"[1] Again, he writes: "God has no better way of instructing men than by making them wait; over-eagerness is man's great defect. Oh! how wise is the man who knows how to wait!" Delay itself was to him a token of the Divine goodness. "The Lord makes us wait for His favours," he said, "so that we may value them more; He employs all the arts of one who loves." Over his cell at Calvario he had written the words, "It is good to await in silence the salvation of God," an echo of the motto over his cell at Stresa, "In silence and in hope shall your strength be." He told Father Paoli that he had never had cause to repent of having abandoned himself with simplicity into the hands of Providence, looking to God alone for the good results of his efforts.

Another effect of his confidence in Divine Providence was that he was neither elated in prosperity nor downcast in adversity. Instead of wishing for prosperity, he feared it, because the soul intoxicated by success soon loses energy. In the early days of the Institute, when the little bark sailed peacefully on, the calm caused him some uneasiness. "I hope," he wrote to Mellerio, "that if things go on so well, some great trial will not be wanting." To Father Lowenbruck he wrote: "The favour of men never smiles on me without causing me to fear; God grant that I may die rather than place my hope in men or in human things." Father Rusca said to him on one occasion: "Father, we are so tranquil now, how can we be sure that we are pleasing to God?" "We are but children," he answered, "and God knows our weakness; when He sees that we are grown up, He will know how to send us the dry bread of tribulation." Ten years after the foundation of the Institute, whilst it was making but slow progress, Father Paoli, looking at the large house erected by Father Rosmini for a novitiate on the hill at Stresa, remarked to him that he

[1] Ecclus. xiii. 9.

must have had great confidence in God to build it. He replied: "Certainly I have, and I can assure you that I am not faint-hearted because we are a little flock; on the contrary, this increases my faith, and if we were obliged to go on as slowly for a hundred years longer, my faith would be as great at the end of that time, if not greater." No sooner did obstacles begin to arise than he took them as a good sign, and gave thanks to God; the more they increased, the higher did his hopes rise, and when he was destitute of all human support, they reached their height, because they were then purer and quite free from all earthly admixture. "I am never so full of hope," he was heard to say, "as when everything seems desperate. Let us wait, I say to myself, and see how the Lord will extricate us from this difficulty."

In the spring of 1837, Father Rosmini, having to meet the expenses of the house of San Michele, found himself in difficulties because the Royal Treasurer persistently refused to pay a large sum which was due. One morning he called Father Gilardi, and said to him, "Go to the Treasury offices for the money due to us, and trust in God." Meanwhile he stopped what he was dictating, and knelt down on a prie-dieu, where he remained some time in prayer. Back came Gilardi before long, full of joy, and with a good sum of money; upon which the Father greeted him cheerfully with these words: "I knew you would not come back empty-handed, because I besought our Lord." (This anecdote is from Father Signini.)

Once, in very dark days, he remarked, "If our troubles were even ten times more grievous, my trust in God would only be the firmer." In times of public calamity, his exclamation was *Est Deus in Israel;* and keenly as he felt the evils that afflicted the Church, over which he mourned in the sight of God, he was never disquieted by them; and one of his Maxims of Christian Perfection is this: "To remain in perfect tranquillity about everything that happens by the Divine appointment, not only with regard to our-

selves, but also with regard to the Church of Christ." He knew that God never permits evil except for the good that will be produced from it; therefore, always peaceful, he sought to draw good out of evil, thus imitating, as far as man may, the work of the Divine restorer. Consequently his hopes were not feeble and inoperative, but were founded on the Sovereign Good, from whom they derived courage and vigorous activity.

Another effect of his confidence in Divine Providence was the interior peace, or rather, the joy which accompanied and consoled him in all his tribulations; because souls that are strong in faith and love taste purer joys from on high in proportion to the depth of their sorrows. When he or his were afflicted by sickness, by loss of friends, by calumny, contradictions, or persecutions, his soul, always raised to the heights of unalterable serenity, reminded one of a cloudless sky smiling above a tempest-tossed ocean. He was accustomed to bless the Lord in failure as well as in success; "because," he said, "the thought that all events are the will of God is so sweet as to make one quite tranquil and satisfied." He had a very special affection for Father Giulio Todeschi, a highly gifted priest, possessed of keen intellect and wonderful goodness of heart, one whom he described as a pillar of the Institute. What a terrible blow must it not have been, to receive the unexpected news of his early death! Yet he was heard to exclaim, "Our Lord takes away my supports one after the other, that I may learn to lean on Him alone;" then, he added as usual, *Fiat voluntas Dei: sit nomen Domini benedictum in sæcula.* To his sister Margherita he was devoted, and had for her a tender affection, a natural love, purified and elevated by spiritual motives, for he revered her as a saint, and considered himself unworthy to be her brother. On hearing that her life was in danger, he prayed with intense earnestness for her recovery, but it was not God's will to restore her, and his sorrow was extremely keen. "I have never experienced such sorrow in my life," he wrote to Tommaseo,

"nor did I believe human nature capable of such grief." Still, as soon as the sad announcement reached him, he assembled the Community and addressed a short discourse to them on the adorable designs of Providence, after which they all recited the *Te Deum*.

We see him manifesting the same joyous peace under trial in the darkest days, when forced to withdraw the Institute from Trent, Rovereto, and Verona, and again when it seemed as if he would be obliged to leave Calvario itself. He was still unchanged when his doctrines were opposed and his honour assailed, when he was thwarted in good works undertaken for God, when his political works were prohibited, and his promotion to the Cardinalate fell through; or again, when he was persecuted by the Neapolitan police, hated by the Pontifical Court, and ill-received by the Pope himself, forced to depart as if he were a culprit, with no defence but a clear conscience; and later still, when after the anxiety of a long process, attempts were made to embitter the little consolation he had received from the sentence of the supreme authority, and in many other circumstances which the reader will easily recall. In all these cases, as we frequently see in the lives of the saints, the chief cause of his joyful peace was the trial itself: this joy he esteemed a singular favour from God. Nor was his gladness merely interior; it was clearly expressed in his words, in his glance, and on his brow, and it veiled with its gentle radiance the anguish of his heart. "Never did I see him without the ready smile upon his lips," is the expression of Vito Fornari, who often saw him at Naples in very stormy times. Many others attest from their own experience that, having approached him in great disturbance of mind, his serene and tranquil aspect was sufficient to restore their peace; even now, the remembrance of their Father's constant serenity is to his children a comfort in days of sorrow, which raises their sinking hopes, and kindles them with fresh ardour.

CHARITY.—Faith, "the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not,"[1] is even in this life a foretaste of that infinite Good that will be fully revealed to us in the future life. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."[2]

On this foundation of faith rests charity, which is the love of God, in Himself worthy of love; and the love of our neighbour, lovable for God's sake. We shall therefore speak of charity under this twofold aspect.

Charity, implanted by God in the souls of those who are regenerated in holy Baptism, grew apace from childhood in the soul of Antonio Rosmini, fostered by Divine grace and by the excellent Christian education he received in his own home. What wonder, then, that it was his delight, while still a little child, to read the Bible, the Acts of the Martyrs, and the Lives of the Saints, which often moved him to tears! His quick, intelligent mind and virginal purity of life were the powerful wings on which, from his tenderest years, he soared up to God by love. We find amongst his manuscripts, dated 1813, a little book of notes on *Charity;* the *History of Love* is one of his youthful efforts, and, among his later discourses, the one most admired for its sublime conceptions is that on *Charity*, in which with pious fearlessness he strives to fathom, as far as human mind can penetrate, the abyss of the charity of God and of Christ, which is beyond all science: "the charity of Christ which surpasseth all knowledge." Although he valued science, and was in early years so eager in its pursuit as to say that it was *his one great passion*, yet knowledge itself lost all value in his eyes when compared with charity. "I prize one drop of moral goodness more than a whole ocean of learning," he wrote to a fellow-student; and to another he says, "Insipid, nay, pernicious, would all knowledge appear to me were it not seasoned by the love of God." In maturer years, when, under the conviction that an

[1] Heb. xi. 1. [2] St. John i. 18.

unbelieving generation would be brought back to faith by way of reason, he looked upon study as an indispensable duty and part of his vocation—even then he dreaded the dangers of knowledge, and warned his spiritual children to beware of allowing it to harden their hearts. "I greatly fear science," he said, "and I love charity intensely. I only desire to help in the spread of one science: 'To know only Jesus Christ and Him crucified.'" Being asked once what he considered the most desirable of all things, he answered quickly, "To be in the grace of God"—which is the same as to have charity—"and then, if possible, to be conscious of it." Like all souls filled with love of God, he spoke of Him with tenderest eloquence, and in such discourse became so fervent that, even in the depth of winter, drops of perspiration would stand on his forehead, his eye kindled with an unusual light, and his whole countenance became transfigured. Talking confidentially one day to Father Signini of the series of works he had planned, he said in conclusion, "Then will come the Agathology; but we will write that in Paradise." With these words he turned his gaze, and lifted his outstretched hands towards heaven, rising on tip-toe with an impulse of holy joy which no words can describe. It was only for an instant, "yet none but a soul full of God and enamoured of heavenly things," says Father Signini, "could display such intensity of feeling at the slightest incentive."

The three chief ways in which real love of God manifests itself more clearly than by words, are, zeal for the Divine glory, the endeavouring to fulfil God's will in all things, and a fervent love of prayer.

In Father Rosmini the desire to glorify God in every action had long been cherished. As a child he expressed it by writing at the top of his copy-books, *Soli Deo honor et gloria*, "Honour and glory to God alone." It was a source of great annoyance to him to hear his master holding out the honour and applause of men as a motive for duty. When a young man he firmly determined to devote his

property, talents, learning, strength—everything, in fact—to the glory of God, by doing good to his fellow-men. "All my occupations tend to one object," he wrote in 1815. "Oh, how I long to promote, as far as in me lies, the glory of God's holy name!" One of his ejaculations expresses this: "In all things what is most perfect, in all things the greater glory of God." Zeal for the Divine glory alone induced him to take up his pen and labour with untiring energy to the end of his life, to oppose error and establish the system of truth. He knew from the beginning how frequent and abundant would be the harvest of trials he must expect when he undertook to reap in such a field, but the knowledge never induced him to turn back. "*The lover of truth must prepare to suffer much*," "*The love of truth is inseparable from martyrdom*," were two sentences of his, and his whole life may be called an illustration of and commentary upon the same. Notwithstanding his ardent longing to see God known, loved, and glorified amongst men, Father Rosmini's zeal was not officious, fussy, or violent, because it sprang from charity; and charity is kind, tranquil, full of peace. Hence he avoided unnecessary disputes on religious topics, and never advanced his own opinions unless obliged to do so; he was quite content to say a word in season that might throw light on some truth, or dispel prejudice, and to promote a good work by exhortation, advice, or suggestion. These acts of mild and prudent zeal seldom failed to produce good fruit, as the following examples will show. He went to Recoaro for the benefit of his health in 1825, and whilst there made the acquaintance of a young Greek schismatic, who entered into conversation with him about the separation of the Greek Church from Rome. Father Rosmini, expressing his deep regret concerning the division, proceeded to show how necessary it was that the members should be strictly united to the Head of the true Church, and then explained the causes of the schism and the subtle artifices by which it was maintained. The young man,

touched by his arguments, ended by promising to go to Rome and examine everything calmly, quite ready to embrace the truth as soon as he should discover it. When Father Rosmini was parish priest of Rovereto, a certain person who unfortunately had lost his faith, came to dispute with him on religious matters. The good pastor listened to him patiently, and after replying to all his difficulties, pressed him with some arguments which allowed of no escape. In this dilemma the visitor at last said, "I cannot believe!" On this Father Rosmini replied, "If you cannot believe, pray, at least, that if God exists, He will make you believe in Him." He promised to do so, and a few days later came back a believer; he came to seek further instruction, and in a short time, having made his peace with God, was able to approach the Holy Table. In 1837, when Father Rosmini was staying with the Barnabites at Milan, he met at dinner a gentleman who had brought his son to school. At the end of the repast the gentleman began to address the boy on the necessity of studying hard, of distinguishing himself, of doing himself honour, and so forth. Father Rosmini waited for him to finish, and then turning to the boy, said very gently and graciously, "I hope the young gentleman will also keep in mind the fear of God." "Oh! that is understood," put in the father quickly, "that is the chief point." Yet it was the prudent zeal of the good Father that drew attention to what should have been the chief point, which the gentleman in question was content to pass over without a remark.

Zeal is apt to become restless and violent unless enlightened from above; its light is the wise and excellent will of God, the rule of all justice. This rule Father Rosmini ever kept in view, and endeavoured to conform to it his every action; he saw it shining forth in the precepts of God's law, in the commands of lawful superiors, in the dictates of conscience, in the interior inspirations of grace. When the light was not clear to him, he had recourse to humble and attentive observation of the world around him,

which he regarded as a book written by the wise and provident hand of God; and he sought it chiefly in the needs of his neighbours and their reasonable calls on his charity. When once he discerned the will of God, he applied himself to carry it into effect, calling on God to help him in such words as these, "O my God, make me to know Thee, make me a partaker of Thy nature, that I may be enabled to do what Thou dost and to will what Thou willest." And again, "I wish to do what is for Thy greater glory and according to Thy will. Oh, direct my will that it may be pleasing to Thee!" He entered on the laborious studies in which he was engaged, because such was the Divine will, as he was assured by the Popes, Pius VIII. and Gregory XVI., and this was his sole reason for persevering in the task. "If I followed my own inclination," he one day ingenuously remarked to Father Molinari, "I should give myself up to constant prayer, and then I should not have such frequent headaches; did I not know it to be God's will that I should study, I would never open another book." When he was writing the treatise on *Conscience*, he foresaw the persecutions it would draw upon him, but he was heard to say, "God requires this work of me, and I wish to carry out His will." Whenever things went against him, he would at once exclaim, "It is a sign that it is not God's will," and with that thought he was tranquil and at rest. "There are so many more things I might still have written for you," he said to his sons assembled in deep grief round his dying bed: then, pointing to his attenuated form, he added, in accents of perfect resignation, "Here is the sign that they are not necessary." His love for the will of God was so powerful that he entered heart and soul into the works God required of him, without regard to his inclination for one rather than another; whilst he was equally ready to leave a work he had begun as soon as he perceived that God called him to something else, for he valued any work only in proportion to its conformity to the Divine will. How often did he not quit some im-

portant occupation in which he took delight, in obedience to his principle of recognising in the urgent needs or the requests of his neighbour the sign of God's will! We have already noticed how he interrupted his arduous studies at various times to preach pious discourses on the feasts of the Little Oratory at Milan, to preach the Lent in the Collegiate Church at Domodossola, to give retreats to priests, to instruct poor beggars, to undertake the charge of the parish at Rovereto, and to carry out a diplomatic mission to Rome. We have seen him set aside the most weighty scientific works to write a pamphlet or an academic discourse, to sketch a course of lessons for a friend, to pen a newspaper article—such were the interruptions which, to the regret of many learned men, prevented him from completing the *Commentary on St. John's Gospel*, the *Supernatural Anthropology*, his treatise on *Method*, and his *Theosophy*, all of which he left unfinished, because he would not depart from his rule of conduct.

It is a pleasure to record some edifying facts in proof of his conformity to the will of God. One morning, when he was residing in the novitiate house at Stresa, word was brought to him that, through sickness, the Master of Novices was unable to give the usual instruction on the Rule, and begged him to give it instead. "Most willingly," the Father answered, in his gentle way. Having asked which were the rules to be explained, he went without delay to the room where the novices were assembled and gave the explanation with admirable simplicity and clearness. The instruction turned on two little rules concerning departure from the house and returning, which were apparently so evident as to require no explanation, yet he spoke on them for half-an-hour; and Father Signini assures us he said all that was to be said about them, and not a word too much. Another time, on a Sunday morning, he was walking down the hill towards Stresa, when he met the sacristan from the parish church going up to the novitiate house in search of a priest to preach at High Mass, the parish priest being

prevented by some accident from so doing. "You may go back," said Father Rosmini; "I will do what you require." He went straight to the church, and, finding it was just time for the sermon, mounted the pulpit and preached on the Gospel of the day with such perfect ease, abundance of ideas and spiritual unction, that one of his auditors compared him to the man in the Gospel who drew forth from his treasures new things and old. In 1853, having to go to Turin, he took the opportunity of paying a visit to Don Bosco, the founder of the Salesians. It was a holiday and just time for catechism, and Don Bosco was sadly in want of a helper to break the bread of the Divine word to the crowds of children assembled in his oratory. Hearing that a strange priest had arrived, he sent to beg his assistance in this charitable duty. Father Rosmini at once set to work to explain the Christian Doctrine to the class of lads confided to him. We may easily imagine the wonder and edification of Don Bosco and his companions on discovering that the humble catechist was no other than the Roveretan philosopher. It might indeed be said that the holy man had no longer any will of his own, it was so permeated and absorbed by the Divine will; nay, entirely lost therein. God would seem to have granted the beautiful prayer he wrote in one of his diaries, "May self no longer live in me, O Father, but Thy Divine Son alone; annihilate self in me. May Thy Son alone dwell in me. May self be no longer within me; annihilate self in me. O God! too truly does self still live; slay this self, that Thy Divine Son, Jesus, my only Good, may live in me. Destroy me with 'the breath of Thy mouth.'"

Prayer, by which man enters into loving converse with God, was a sweet and pressing necessity of Father Rosmini's soul. "The heart of the man who does not pray is silent," was one of his sayings, "and the heart's silence is charity growing cold." It may be asserted with truth that this silence of the heart was a thing unknown to him; so deep-rooted was his habit of prayer that it had become a

second nature. "The moment I awake," he writes in his spiritual diary, "I will say, 'Live, Jesus my Beloved and Mary His Mother'—*Vivat* JESUS *amor meus et* MARIA *Mater ejus*. After this first aspiration of love he sets down other ejaculatory prayers to precede or accompany the chief actions of the day; most of them are taken from the Psalms and other portions of Holy Scripture, but seventy or more of his own are short and powerful expressions of intensely spiritual thoughts and affections. On rising he devoted a whole hour to mental prayer, as a preparation for celebrating the Holy Mass. That he might not make his meditation unprepared, he used to assemble the members of his household every evening, and read to them some passage of the Gospel, from which he drew the next day's meditation. He never omitted this pious custom, even in his last illness, except when from extreme weakness he could no longer propose the subject of the meditation to the others, and he then humbly accepted the one proposed by another Father. The exercise of meditation was, in his opinion, so valuable, that he would not allow it to be omitted even by the English missionaries, though the labours of their ministry were almost incredible: "For," he said, "meditation is the weight which maintains the balance of the whole man; all other occupations derive their merit from the exercises of piety." I shall have occasion to speak presently of the way in which he celebrated Holy Mass; here I will remark, that after Mass he spent a quarter of an hour in prayer of thanksgiving, and usually read a chapter of the Bible. By preference he used to recite the Divine Office with a companion, and generally walking; he said it with great composure, as though to relish the meaning of every word, and, should his companion hasten the recitation slightly, he would draw his attention to the fact by look or sign; as he went on, his fervour became so great that his gait and tone of voice took a motion and a cadence that seemed like a spiritual canticle and joyful union with the saints in

heaven. The brief intervals of time between one occupation and another were to him opportunities for prayer, and the brethren who met him going from place to place in the house noticed that he was praying in an undertone, though their attention was drawn to it more by his beaming countenance than by the movement of his lips. The intense longing for solitude, which he felt from his earliest years, sprang from his attraction to prayer. It led him in childhood to withdraw from his companions at play, and inspired him, as a youth, to write the *Day of Solitude*, and take refuge from the company of men in his little country house on the hill, to which he gave the name of Paradise, because he found there the companionship of God and His angels.

It was his custom to retire every year into solitude to refresh his spirit; and even amid the turmoil of 1848, when he was at Rome on his diplomatic mission, he managed to pass one week in holy retirement at the Passionist monastery on Monte Celio. "What happiness would be mine," said he to Father Aimo, "if I could pass my days in some corner of the world unknown to all, with no companion but a little book." Most earnestly too did he seek to foster in his spiritual children the love of prayer. We find it set down in the Constitutions that the first duty of the Provost General is "uninterrupted prayer"; that the first part of a Rector's duty is "to bear the house on his shoulders, as it were, by prayers and holy desires"; that a superior should not enter on his office without first spending some days in retreat. The first elementary masters were required to prepare for their work by a retreat of fifteen days, to draw down upon themselves the blessing of God. He wished those who were about to make their religious profession to watch in prayer the preceding night. All were required to purify their souls once a year by an eight days' retreat—Superiors first of all, and all matters of great importance were to be decided only after having recommended them to God by much prayer.

"Prayer and piety," he would say, "are the means by which God is moved." And again, "Of all philosophies, prayer is the most sublime." Maxims of highest wisdom are these, for prayer is not only the effusion of a heart enamoured of God, but the furnace from which charity draws fuel to feed its own flame, and in which the energies of the spirit are once more tempered and renewed!

Love for Jesus.—Amidst the wonderful variety of types presented to us by the vast multitude of saints on earth and in heaven, there is a point in which all are alike, and which forms, as it were, a common basis of their sanctity. This resemblance consists in a deep and ardent love of Jesus Christ. Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, the first-born of all creatures, consubstantial with the Father, and our Brother according to the flesh, unites in Himself the treasures of the Divinity and the graces of the humanity; He is the epitome of all that is beautiful, good, or lovable in the universe. How then could He fail to be the perpetual object of the love of the saints?

Those who were admitted to familiar intercourse with Father Rosmini, even for a short time, readily perceived how his holy soul burned with love of our Lord. Jesus Christ was the favourite theme of his discourses—for we readily speak of what we love—and as he proceeded his words grew more animated, his countenance became radiant, and, carried out of himself by His theme, he seemed unable to stop. "Any discourse into which this adorable Name enters," he wrote to a friend, "is so captivating that one hardly knows how to conclude it." It was his custom to write this dear name in capitals, and amongst the letters he received, those in which the Holy Name occurred were always the most welcome, because "they distilled that oil which is all fragrance, and without which everything would be insipid to the Christian soul." The only science in which he gloried, and which he burned to communicate to all men, was the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The ultimate object

of all he wrote was, he said, "To make known to mankind Jesus Christ and His salvation." Being asked once by a missionary for some advice, he said to him, "Bring the people back to Jesus Christ, and you will make more Catholics in Italy than on the foreign missions." He himself, when preaching the Lent at Domodossola, chose but one subject—the Imitation of Christ—a source which, to a loving heart, is inexhaustible. Every one who has read his *Christian Education* will remember the passage, full of pathos, in which he touchingly laments the fact that our Lord is in these days a stranger to most men; and he goes on to recall, with heartfelt longing, those first ages of Christianity, when the presence of Jesus Christ was living, and, as it were, impressed on all things, when men thought of Him not only as God, but as one of their own race—a master, a companion, and a friend. He longed to see those days return. Pages of wonderful beauty are these, so striking that Alessandro Manzoni discerned in them the same spirit of faith and charity which characterises the works of the early Fathers of the Church!

His love of Jesus was manifested above all in devotion to the sacred humanity, hidden in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. He called the altar "the sweet retreat and nuptial couch of loving souls," and when he drew near to it his fervour grew intense. How beautiful it was to see him kneeling before the tabernacle, motionless and without support for hours together, his face radiant with peace and love! One who saw him thus did not hesitate to call him "The man of the Blessed Sacrament." Still more beautiful was it to see him in the act of celebrating the divine mysteries. Those who had the opportunity of observing him offering the Holy Sacrifice unanimously assert that he was "another man," in fact, no longer a man, but "an angel," that he appeared like "a seraph," and seemed to be rapt in ecstasy, "absorbed in God, conversing with Him." A young novice, who, when serving his Mass, noticed that he appeared to be out of himself, began to think he was

distracted by other thoughts. This temptation he acknowledged to Father Rosmini with great simplicity, and was answered with candid kindliness: "No, dear; thank God, I am not troubled with distractions at Mass": from which remark his sons concluded that by a singular grace from God he was exempt from distractions when saying Mass. The ardour of his soul found vent outwardly, too, and Father Molinari attests that when he assisted him to unvest, his vestments were quite hot, even in the depth of winter: similar facts are recorded of saints, such as St. Stanislaus, St. Philip Neri, and St. Wenceslaus. The loving tenderness which filled his heart during these precious moments, though modestly concealed by him, may well be imagined when we reflect that, as a young priest, he could never read the Gospel of St. John without pausing again and again to master his emotion. Only once did he allude to the infusion of light from above, granted to him in these affectionate colloquies with God, and that was one day when, shortly after Mass, he said to Father Molinari: "Our Lord enlightened my mind this morning upon a subject which I have long been trying to penetrate."

He certainly felt that his doctrines were more the result of a gracious communication from God than of study or other human means. May we not, therefore, conclude with good reason that God vouchsafed to grant him light in greater abundance during those hours of closest union with His Divine Majesty? After Mass he remained a considerable time in prayer, and his recollection was so profound that he did not appear to notice or hear anything that was passing around him. "In the whole course of my sixty years of life," says Father Signini, "I have never once seen Holy Mass celebrated with such absolutely perfect recollection, intense concentration of mind, and fervent devotion, as that with which our Father always celebrated Mass. I say *always* advisedly, to emphasise the fact that, although we all of necessity experience many changes in our state and condition, I never saw in him any deviation from what

I have stated in regard to his way of offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar. From the moment he turned his steps to the sacristy until his return after his thanksgiving, he seemed no longer of this earth, and one would have shrunk from disturbing him by any unnecessary words, for fear of intruding on a man so entirely absorbed in the things of heaven.

This ardent love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament rendered every little act connected with Divine worship extremely precious to him, and infused into them all inexpressible sweetness. We have already seen how delighted he was at the thought of taking part with the people in the Corpus Christi procession, and he rejoiced still more when it was his lot to carry the Blessed Sacrament in his own hands. At Calvario he was always happy to serve Father Molinari's Mass like a simple acolyte. Great was his love for churches, the temples of the living God; he would always secure the best artists to decorate them or adorn them with pictures, and he never liked to hear any one calculate too nicely the cost of what would add to the beauty of God's house. The mere thought that a Divine Guest dwelt under his roof was joy to his heart, while it was a grief to him to be deprived of that Sacred Presence. When the house at Trent was being established, he begged Father Rigler to do his utmost to have the Blessed Sacrament in the house. "It is a great privation," he said, "to be without It." As soon as he knew that his wish was about to be fulfilled, he hastened to write: "My heart is filled with joy at hearing that the altar-stone is being fixed. Perhaps our Treasure is already in the house: I await the happy tidings; as long as our only Good is not under our roof, all our work and our building appear to me worthless." When a new church had to be built for the novitiate at Stresa, the novices worked with their spades at the foundations, and the Father came now and then to see them. He was delighted beyond measure with their earnestness, and to encourage them, as well as to do his share, he

would take spade and pickaxe and work away with them, as though wishing to say with King David: "It is a great work, for a house is prepared, not for man, but for God."[1]

Devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ is another form in which love for the Sacred Humanity is shown by holy souls. Father Rosmini, who was born on a Friday, the day consecrated to the sufferings of the Man-God, loved this devotion exceedingly. His spiritual diary begins with the Commemoration of the shedding of our Saviour's Precious Blood, which he had been accustomed to recite daily from his youth upwards, offering to the Divine Father in sacrifice his own blood in union with that of Jesus Christ, from which every other sacrifice derives its value. He consecrated his Society to Christ our Redeemer; and when, in his uncertainty as to where he should establish it, the Calvary at Domodossola was indicated to him, he took it as an inspiration from God, for which he joyfully gave thanks. The first Churches of the Institute at Calvario, Trent, and Stresa were dedicated to Christ Crucified, and in the Constitutions he earnestly recommends the members, especially the Presbyters, to offer daily to the Eternal Father their own blood in union with the Precious Blood of our Redeemer. If any one, dismayed at the thought of the arduous sacrifice, feels that he has not strength of mind or courage to carry it out, he bids him entreat the Divine mercy to accept the offering, at least as far as it is not beyond his strength. Our Lord would seem to have given a visible token of His acceptance of Father Rosmini's daily offering of his blood for upwards of thirty years, by calling him to Himself on the Feast of the Most Precious Blood of our Divine Redeemer.

Love for Mary.—True love for the Sacred Humanity of Christ can never be separated from the love of Mary, since Christ's flesh and blood is the flesh and blood of Mary; she is the most faithful copy of Christ our Lord, and we

[1] 1 Paral. xxix. 1.

cannot even think of Jesus without thinking of Mary through whom He was given to us. These two loves spring up together, and are ever united in the hearts of the saints; and the intensity of one is the measure of the other.

Father Rosmini, who considered it a special grace from God to have come into this world on the Eve of the Annunciation and to have been born again to Heaven on the Feast itself, had a tender devotion to Mary from his very infancy, and asserted that he experienced even then the powerful effects of her patronage. Hence he placed his fullest confidence, after God, in our Blessed Lady; he turned to her for help in anxiety or danger and found comfort in the invocation of her sweet name, or even in thinking of her. It was to him a supernatural delight to hear others speak of the Blessed Virgin, a sign of true love for her. One day when Tommaseo was reciting Manzoni's verses on the Nativity—lines sublime in their simplicity:—

> " La mira Madre in poveri
> Panni il Figluol compose,
> E nell' umil presepio
> Soavemente il pose
> E l'adorò : beata. . . ."

Father Rosmini was seized with sudden emotion at these beautiful words, and wishing, as great souls do, to hide his feelings, was obliged to withdraw to another room. To speak or write of the Blessed Virgin was no less a pleasure to him. In a memorable conference given to the novices on the Feast of the Heart of Mary, he applied St. Paul's text on the four dimensions of charity to the charity of most Holy Mary; his language, at first humble and quiet, became, as he proceeded, so sublime and fervent that his hearers, astonished and delighted, felt themselves uplifted to the lofty heights of charity which he described. In 1845, to prove the antiquity of devotion to the Mother of God, he wrote a dissertation entitled, *Testimony of the Koran to the*

Virgin Mary.[1] In 1848 he dedicated his *Commentary on the Magnificat* to the Sisters of Providence; the little treatise, written in a very simple style, contains many original and apposite reflections, which aid one to recite with greater intelligence and fervour this wonderful canticle. A beautiful page in the *Maxims of Christian Perfection* depicts in delicate tints the young Virgin of Nazareth, silent, hidden, unknown; and proposes her to the Christian as a model of the deepest humility. The last book of his *Supernatural Anthropology* was to have treated of the Mother of our Redeemer, and God alone knows what beautiful things his wisdom and love would have set forth on this welcome subject, had he been spared to complete the task; but we know that his devout soul rejoiced in the anticipation of this great work. "Oh, what a consolation will it be," he wrote to Barola, "if it is granted me to carry my work to that point; the thought of it thrills me with joy. Do you pray to our dear Mother to procure and bestow on me light to write worthily of her." In 1849, when Pope Pius IX. charged him to write his opinion with regard to the definition of the Immaculate Conception, he considered it a great happiness that the first vote demanded of him by the Holy See should be on a subject so noble and delightful; and he had the consolation of seeing that the Holy Father deigned to prefer his view where it differed from those of eighteen of Rome's most distinguished theologians.

All his letters to Barola, whom he knew to be full of tender devotion to our Lady, contain a reference, an affectionate word, a salutation to her whom he called "sweetest Mother, heart's delight, dear protectress of life"; and it is beautiful to note how the cold, measured language of the philosopher is here changed all at once for the warm and impassioned speech of the loving soul. A letter of his, well worthy of record, is

[1] This discourse has lately been inserted in a small volume containing some of Antonio Rosmini's writings concerning our Lady. It was published in Rome in 1904, on the occasion of the Jubilee of the Immaculate Conception.

addressed to the Abate Polidori of Loreto, in which, after having expressed his sorrow at seeing in the *Amico Cattolico* a proposition wanting in reverence to the Mother of God, his zeal for Mary's honour is enkindled; and he goes on to prove in various ways that this proposition, which had probably escaped the notice of the writer, grates on the ears of the faithful and is painful to the Christian soul. He begs Don Polidori, by his love for Mary, to see the proposition withdrawn.

Love shows itself in external marks of respect towards the person beloved, provided always that they are the faithful expression of what the soul feels. A token of love, small in itself, but expressive of Father Rosmini's tender affection for Mary, was, that he always wrote her venerated name in capitals; and we read in one of his diaries that from youth he had the custom of reciting daily the five Psalms in honour of the Name of Mary. Another practice of piety very dear to him was to visit the Sanctuaries of the Madonna, though he took the opportunities offered by Providence for making these pilgrimages, and did not make them for mere spiritual enjoyment. Thus in 1823, on his way to Rome with Mgr. Pyrker, he stayed at Loreto to visit the Holy House; in 1831, returning from Rovereto to Domodossola, he visited the shrine of our Lady at Caravaggio to ask for a certain grace, promising to offer in thanksgiving a silver lamp worth at least a hundred florins if his request were granted; the following year he returned with the lamp to fulfil his vow. In 1844 he visited the Sanctuary of Varallo, in the diocese of Novara, and the one at Piova, in the diocese of Ivrea, where he gave a retreat to the clergy; in 1846 he went to the Sanctuary of Re with Count Mellerio; in 1852 he took Bonghi as his companion on a pilgrimage to Varese, and edified him much by the great simplicity, fervour, and faith with which he went up the mountain, reciting the Rosary with manifest delight. Bonghi notes this in one of his diaries. The Rosary was his favourite devotion

in honour of our Lady, and he always wore his beads under his vesture out of devout affection; every day he recited the Rosary on his knees, and invited his guests or travelling companions to recite it with him. He made it a rule for the members of his Society to recite the Chaplet daily, and recommended it as a protection to Christian families, in his discourse on the Rosary, one of the best of his published sermons. The only advice he gave Father Paoli, when once about to preach a mission, was to have confidence in God and endeavour to introduce into the homes of the people the pious custom of reciting the Rosary daily. Father Rosmini was convinced that the Institute of Charity owed its foundation to Mary, because it was in the chapel of the Madonna at St. Celsus, in Milan, that Father Polidori first had the idea of suggesting Calvario as the place for establishing the Institute. He therefore dedicated that house to the Blessed Virgin as well as to our Lord, and in the greatest dangers he would place it in her hands and then remain at peace. "The whole Institute is her little child," he would say; "let our Mother see to it." "After Jesus Christ, she was," he said, "the model, the mistress, and the leader of the Institute," and by his desire a picture of our Lady of Sorrows was, with the Crucifix, to be hung up in the cells of all his religious children. One of the customs established in the houses of Trent and Calvario from the first was that during dinner on Saturday a discourse on our Lady should be given; and amongst the entries in his spiritual diary is the beautiful outline of an exhortation of this kind, which he himself made in 1834 to the brethren at Calvario on the Saturday after the Visitation, showing how our Lady acted on that occasion, according to the rules of charity adopted by the Institute in the exercise of charitable works. Another pious custom introduced by him into the Institute was the Saturday's fast in honour of Mary, and we read in the above-named diary a resolution, made at the evening meditation on the 15th of December 1835, to observe this fast more strictly. In 1843, before

the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was defined, he asked and obtained permission from the Holy See to add the invocation, *O Regina sine labe concepta*, to the Litany of Loreto, and to insert the words, *Et te in conceptione immaculata* to the Preface of the Mass. When, in 1854, Pope Pius IX. proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, he rejoiced exceedingly to see this new gem inserted in the crown of our Queen and Mother; on the day of the solemn definition, ill as he was, he went to take part in the celebration at the College at Stresa. There was a solemn triduum at the novitiate house with discourses preached by Fathers De Vitt, Gilardi, and Puecher respectively, and at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, which closed each day's function, he himself officiated. One of the consolations of his closing days was the news that the people of Rovereto had placed their town under the protection of Mary, Help of Christians, whereupon he at once sent 1000 lire to the archpriest, Don Strosio, for the celebration of a yearly triduum in preparation for that feast.

It is a pious belief that one of the graces with which the Blessed Virgin favours souls specially dear to her, is that she calls them to Heaven on a Saturday or on the eve of one of her feasts. If this be so, we like to think that she conferred this privilege on her faithful servant, for Father Rosmini quitted this world in the early hours of the day before the Feast of the Visitation.

Love for Holy Church.—We cannot love Jesus Christ without loving His Church, the triumph of His omnipotence, His spouse, redeemed and purified by His most precious Blood, His mystical body, and the fulness thereof.

Father Rosmini was accustomed to consider the Church of the Redeemer in this triple aspect, especially in the third: he took unbounded delight in speaking of our incorporation with Christ, which, begun in Baptism, is gradually rendered more perfect in the other Sacraments, and is

intended to reach its completion at the end of time, when, the prayer of Christ to His Father being realised, the Elect will be made perfect in one and all things, "restored in Christ." From this ineffable union with Christ the faithful derive their greatness, and Father Rosmini wished that the energy of all Christian instruction should be directed to make men "know and feel the dignity and the happiness of being members of the Church of Christ, of that immense and Divine Society which is worthy of all our love." He said that the Church ought to be loved with boundless love, and that we should even be prepared to die for her; and amongst the Maxims of Christian Perfection the second is: "To direct all our thoughts and actions to the increase and to the glory of the Church of Jesus Christ." His purpose in founding the Institute was to give the members a more vivid consciousness of their union with Christ and of their own dignity, so that the great Society of Christians might in consequence be more powerful against the children of this world. Hence he looked upon his own Institute and on all religious Orders only as handmaids of the Church. "Whilst they remain such," he said, "they are not the work of man, but of God, that is, of Jesus Christ." He wished them to be loved, not for their own sakes, but out of love for the Church, which cannot be loved too much. "Let each member fear to do evil," he admonishes his sons in the Constitutions, "for that would do harm to the Society; but let him never fear for its stability or prosperity, whilst he himself loves God and fulfils His law. For our Heavenly Father, through love for Jesus Christ, will preserve and protect it as long as it is useful to the Church; whereas, if it should become useless or dangerous, He would by a just judgment cut down the unfruitful tree and cast it into the fire. Therefore the entire Society relies, not on human prudence, but on the Providence of our Heavenly Father, who is always to be praised, both in its foundation and in its destruction." If we consider the more than maternal affection the Founder had for his Institute—the

offspring of his mind and heart—we cannot fail to admire in these words the noble disinterestedness with which he is ready to immolate it for the glory and benefit of Christ's Church. No apprehension caused him such acute pain as the fear lest a so-called *esprit de corps* should enter into the Society, for by its means religious societies, loving their Order for its own sake rather than for the sake of the Church, end by abandoning the Church. When he was reading the Constitutions of a celebrated religious Order in preparation for writing his own, he frequently came across the words, "for the good of the Society," and each time he substituted in the margin: "for THE GOOD OF THE CHURCH," adding, *et sic semper*. He was afraid that the *esprit de corps* would, sooner or later, insinuate itself into this "good of the Society," and in order to keep it out he strove to direct the affection of his sons towards the good of the Church.

Out of his love for the Church came forth reverence for all her rites and prayers, zeal to promote her good, and filial obedience to her precepts.

The rites of the Church he considered as the wise language in which, like a loving Mother, she instructs her children in the things of Heaven; he looked upon it as a disgrace for a Christian not to understand this language, and was never tired of preaching the necessity of instructing the people on this point. In his *Christian Education* he undertook to explain the mystical sense of the various objects used in divine worship, the vestments and sacred ornaments, especially those used in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and he also wrote a little treatise on the *Method of Hearing Holy Mass*. He admired the beauty and value of every ecclesiastical ceremony, even the least, and in order to lead others to admire them he devoted a considerable space in *Christian Education* to a commentary on the *sincerity*, *order*, *majesty*, *reverence*, and *charity* which animate them; and to place these characteristics in stronger relief, he contrasts them with the etiquette of the world, so artificial, disorderly,

insipid, and cold. He set equal value on the public prayers of the Church; the Missal especially, the Breviary, and the Martyrology, contained, he said, "an infinite store of the most solid sentiments of piety and of the tenderest affections." His firm conviction that the Church is guided by the Spirit of God led him to prefer the forms of prayer used by her from the earliest ages, before those introduced in recent times by individuals; for the latter, even supposing them to be good, have not the venerable character attaching to the former for their antiquity, their noble origin, and the rich vein of devotion so evident in the ancient prayers of the Church.

It is almost needless to remark that one who loved the Church so well was zealous for her welfare. We have seen how courageously he rose up in defence of her rights with speech and pen; and, though naturally meek and humble, he would at times inveigh in vehement words against the usurpation of her oppressors. We have seen him undertake the difficult mission to Rome in order to maintain her liberties, though he clearly foresaw the suffering it would entail on him, and the extreme danger to which his very life would be exposed in those days of popular excitement, well-nigh of frenzy. His desire was to see the Church free, not only free from violent persecution, but from all kinds of oppression, even so-called protection, for it is not less fatal to be smothered between pillows than to be ground between millstones. We know that he felt keenly the evils which afflicted the Spouse of Christ, and when he contemplated them his heartfelt sorrow found vent in words that sound like an echo of those uttered in former times by such outspoken saints as Jerome, Peter Damian, Bernard, Catherine of Siena, and others.

Obedience to the precepts of the Church was a duty which he strongly urged others to practise and practised himself with the utmost exactitude, almost to a scruple. His rules prescribe no abstinences or other austerities, but for this very reason he would have the fasts and abstinence

of the Church strictly observed. In the *Constitutions* he recommends Superiors to avoid sending out missioners who cannot observe the abstinence. "With those who are bound to fast, be rigorous," he wrote to one of his Superiors, "so that the precept may not be broken without one of those solid reasons for which the Church grants a dispensation." On this point he was rigorous with himself. Our readers will not have forgotten his strict fast and abstinence at Calvario during the Lent of 1828, whilst he was still suffering, and barely convalescent, after an illness. Father Signini, who was with him at Turin in the Lent of 1837, relates that when he was occasionally obliged to anticipate the evening collation and dine late, he sent to the Church of the Holy Martyrs to get permission from his confessor, a Jesuit father. Towards the end of his life he was sometimes obliged on fast days to take a few drops of milk with his coffee in the morning, perhaps because his weak stomach could not bear it without milk. The cleric, his secretary, who sat by him, noticing this, thought he might do the same, although he had no such infirmity; the Father made no remark, but from that time he went without the milk and took the coffee black. A small matter this, but it shows his delicacy of conscience concerning the strict observance of the precepts of the Church, and his fear lest any of the weak should make his example an excuse for violating them. No less careful was he to see that the obligation of hearing Mass on Sundays and Holydays was observed. On the rare occasions when he was unable to say Mass during his journeys, as, for instance, in his flight from Rome to Gaeta, he arranged for hearing Mass, and was careful to see that those who travelled with him did the same. One Sunday, when all were assembled in the Oratory for Mass, and he was already vested, he noticed that a young gentleman who was staying with him had not arrived. He sent the server to look for him, whilst he waited patiently in the sacristy; the server, not finding

him, was sent off a second time to search, and only when it was ascertained that the stranger had gone out early did the Father go to the altar. This too may seem a small matter, but it shows his anxiety to provide, as far as it lay in his power, for the observance of the precepts of the Church.

Although Christian charity embraces the whole of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, yet it centres in that, which by Divine disposition has become the essential part —the see of Peter—which, according to Christ's promise, will never fail. "The Christian, therefore," so writes Father Rosmini in the *Maxims of Christian Perfection*, "ought to cherish an affection, an attachment, and an unlimited respect for the Holy See of the Roman Pontiff; he should love without limit, and try to promote the true and sacred glory, honour, and prosperity of this essential part of the immaculate Spouse of Jesus Christ." He himself gave the brightest example of this boundless devotion, which he declared to be due to the Holy See. We saw him at seventeen years of age declaring in the book of *Thoughts* his entire submission of everything he might write to the authority of the Church; we have seen him as a young priest praising in the most outspoken manner the grandeur of the Papacy in the *Panegyric of Pius VII.*, which earned him annoyances without end—a first specimen of the kind of reward his devotion to the Sovereign Pontiff was to procure him. No sooner had he clearly discerned his vocation as a writer and founder than he decided to go to Rome in order to "draw near to the fount of pure water, and to make sure from the very first that he was closely united with the Church." He spent a year in the holy city, and, when he quitted it, left his heart there. "Write me news of Rome," he says in a letter to Barola; "you know well my love for that city; the love it awakens in me is unlike the love of country, and far more intense." He looked to Rome as the mistress of the world; and he required his children to conform themselves to the Roman

Church, not only in matters of doctrine, but also in sacred ritual, and even in their attire, and he recommended them to try to introduce this conformity everywhere amongst the clergy, as far as it lay in their power.

Obedience—humble, prompt and entire obedience—may be called the touchstone by which to ascertain whether the devotedness professed towards the Holy See is sincere. Father Rosmini's obedience was such that it would be difficult to imagine an obedience more perfect. It was in obedience to Pius VIII. that he devoted himself to writing for the restoration of the sciences in the interests of religion, and it was at the desire of Gregory XVI. that he continued the arduous task to the end of his life. In compliance with the wishes of Pope Pius IX. he published, in 1849, a treatise on *Communism and Socialism*, and in 1854 began two *Dissertations*, which death prevented him from completing. When Pope Gregory issued his precept of silence, Father Rosmini at once laid down his pen, gave up all controversy, stopped the printing of his work on *Rationalism in Theology*, and withdrew all the copies from circulation; he made it a matter of conscience to observe the precept, and to see that it was observed by the members of the Order, and even by outsiders, although his adversaries did not scruple to transgress it. Again, we have seen that when God, to render the virtue of his servant more conspicuous, permitted that two of his works should be prohibited by the Congregation of the Index, he submitted with the most prompt obedience. Nor was the act a difficult one to him, for it was the expression of the constant habitual submission of mind to the Church, which had been his attitude from his youth. "I have simply done my duty," he says in one of his letters, "and by God's grace it has cost me no effort. I have only expressed the very sentiment of submission to ecclesiastical authority which I had before the works were prohibited, and, indeed, before they were written. This being the case, I felt I was doing nothing new, but an act as old as

my filial devotion to the Church, which was born with me: *hæreditate acquisivi testimonia tua.*" Some years later, while his works were being examined at Rome, and his friends were in great fear on his account, one day Bonghi said to him suddenly, "What would you do if your works were condemned?" "Submit," was the prompt and decided reply. God did not permit the condemnation, but it is a matter of edification to us to know his disposition of mind, and that the merit of obedience was already gained by the resolute preparation of his will. Nor must we overlook the fact that, in order to bind his Society to the Holy See by a stronger tie, he inserted in the *Constitutions* a special vow of obedience, by which the Presbyters of the Institute offer themselves to the Sovereign Pontiff for any work, however arduous, even at the sacrifice of their lives.

Another proof of devotedness to the Holy See was given by Father Rosmini when he left his home and went into exile with Pius IX. to share the Pontiff's sorrows. Then it seemed indeed as if his desires were to be fulfilled of wearing out his strength, and, if necessary, shedding his blood for the Church of Christ. We know how he sacrificed his money, his time, his repose, and his study, what fatigue he underwent, and the disappointments and humiliations he suffered. Out of love for the Sovereign Pontiff he endured the bitter envy of the Court, the rudeness of an insolent household, the calumnies of a time-serving press, the anger of the mob, annoyances from the police, ingratitude from those whom he had benefited, and, at last, his separation from the Pope himself. All this is known to the reader, and still further how, defying unpopularity, he did his utmost to strengthen the dominion of the Holy See over the Papal States, and to secure its position, by exposing the machinations of those who were bent on weakening it. Yet, in spite of all this, when he found himself driven almost by violence from the Sovereign Pontiff's side and banished like a culprit, he silently drank the bitter chalice to the dregs.

In conclusion I will remark that Father Rosmini showed particular and affectionate homage and reverence to bishops as being also appointed by the Holy Spirit to govern the Church of God. It is laid down in the *Constitutions* that the requests of bishops are to have the first consideration in the selection of works of charity, and he speaks of their very wishes as worthy of *reverence*. He was a man of faith, and, as such, venerated the perfection of the priesthood and the power of Christ conferred on bishops, that they might feed the flock of the Divine Shepherd; and they in return, we are told by those who had the opportunity of observing it, revered in him the prestige of his science, enhanced by the sanctity of his life.

Love for Mankind.—Universality is the chief characteristic of Christian charity, which, coming from God and returning to Him, embraces in its wide circuit all mankind, past, present, and to come, because it sees them

> "All made to one resemblance,
> All children of the same redemption."

Such was Father Rosmini's charity; to love all men was a necessity of his nature. To his friend Paravia, who once acknowledged that he disliked certain people, he frankly replied, "And I find it a necessity to love every one." He wrote to his brother on one occasion, "Nothing is pleasanter to me than to love all men; my nature is made to love. I have always loved every one, and have never in my life known what it was to hate anybody." This natural love, elevated by grace into a supernatural virtue, became in him true charity; and to remind himself of its divine origin, no less than to keep its fire burning brightly in his heart, he wrote on the tablet at his cell-door the words of St. John: "Dearly beloved, let us love one another, for charity is of God." It was the ardour of this heavenly flame that led him to conceive and carry out the plan of the Institute of Charity, because the great designs of holy

men are produced by the heart rather than by the mind. Universal charity was the ensign he gave to his Institute, bestowed on it, as he declared, by Christ Himself. Therefore he would exclude no work of charity; but, as it was impossible to include all charitable works, he embraced all at least in desire. There was nothing he strove more earnestly to impress on the members of the Institute than mutual charity; it was "the precept of the Lord," he said, "the true mark of the disciple of Christ," and "upon no point was it more necessary to make a strict examination." Tradition says that this was the first question he put to Father Molinari when going up to Calvario for a visitation of the house, "Does the spirit of union and charity reign amongst the brethren?" a proof that he considered this the chief, if not the only point to be ascertained. Breaches of charity he never tolerated, and when correcting them, he would, contrary to his custom, assume a tone of severity. A decree which he wrote for the prevention and correction of uncharitable conversation was communicated to each member of the Order for insertion in the Book of Rules. He there quotes the words of St. Paul, "Slanderers shall not possess the kingdom of God," and concludes, "Therefore, brethren who are evil-speakers and are found to be incorrigible become unworthy to remain in the Institute of Charity, which should be on earth an image of the kingdom of God in Heaven, and should itself be a kingdom of God."

Charity, which is a very vast field, may be called threefold; for though one in essence, it is triple in form—corporeal, intellectual, and spiritual—according to the nature of the benefits it confers. We shall gather but a small sheaf out of the abundant harvest produced in this field by Father Rosmini, and our readers will glean much more when we have to speak of the virtues in which charity is particularly exercised.

I. Of the three forms of charity we will begin with the lowest, viz., corporal or temporal charity. Father Rosmini possessed in a marked degree the power of entering into

the feelings of others as if they were his own—a mysterious power which he calls *inoggetivazione*, and which, with singular keenness of observation, he was the first to point out and to describe in all its many developments with philosophical precision. From it sprang the feeling of compassion which, we may say, was innate in him. We have seen him, when a tiny child, deprive himself of his luncheon to bestow it on the poor, and throw his new socks out of the window to a little child trembling with cold. This feeling increased with his years, so that he could say with holy Job, "From my infancy, mercy grew up with me." It would take long to recount what has already been told in part, how abundant were his alms, whether in money, food, or clothing, whilst yet in his own home; still more profuse were the charities he distributed whilst parish priest of Rovereto, and those which he continued to bestow all his life long. Some of these are detailed in written documents; and his intimate friends have disclosed other facts, but even they could not tell us all, for he often managed that his left hand should not know what his right hand gave. I will rather draw attention to his tender charity in bestowing alms under the appearance of a salary, that the receivers might not be put to shame. He invited Tommaseo to reside with him, and offered him a salary on condition of his rendering the *Metafisica* into Latin, giving him in this way an honourable position, together with valuable counsel and assistance, to persevere in his good resolutions. Several promising youths of scanty means were employed by him in his home as secretaries, and, while paying them for their services, he afforded them leisure to cultivate mind and heart under his guidance. One delicate and prudent exercise of charity was his practice of lending money without interest, only requiring the borrower to return it when no longer needed; such an act of kindness caused no humiliation to the person relieved, nor did it tend to encourage sloth or idleness; and the source of the benefit, not being limited to the first good deed, did not

remain stagnant, but, like an ever-flowing stream, carried relief to many of the needy. To remit a debt, either wholly or in part, when the debtor could not discharge it, was another excellent form of charity which he frequently employed, especially in the case of his tenants. Their rent was never raised, even when the landlord met with reverses, nor did he demand rent of any kind when he knew that a poor harvest had made it difficult for them to pay.

Hospitality and the care of the sick are two works of corporal charity which Father Rosmini exercised with large-hearted generosity, and which he loved to see his spiritual children perform, because they are expressly recommended by Christ. In 1821 he received as a guest young Antonio Bassich, who was in great distress and had been cast off by his family; in 1825 a priest, named Cranielo, suffering from a nervous complaint and other troubles, was hospitably entertained in his house; Tommaseo spent the year 1826 with him at Milan; good old Fra Pietro, a former Franciscan, experienced his kind care at Calvario in 1835; Professor Aycardi, who was dying of consumption, was received in 1851 at Stresa, where he desired to end his days in peace; in 1854 he sent an old blind beggar from Magognino as a precious gift to his novices, that they might welcome him and wait upon him as they would upon Christ Himself. "The Institute of Charity should be gracious towards all," he said, "and therefore it should be most hospitable." We shall refer later on to his loving care for the sick, but we may here remark that he looked on the service of the sick as particularly suitable to the Institute, and during its early days, when Italy was threatened with cholera, he desired the members to offer their services to the Bishops of Novara and Trent, and himself gladly volunteered to be of the number. I am pleased to be able to mention here also that he would not exclude any one from the Institute on account of weak health or deformity: "Our Institute should receive, if possible," he says, "those

that are refused by others, because it is the Institute of Charity."

I cannot leave this subject without touching on some traits of his charitable compassion for children. He loved children, and, as he learnt much from long and patient observation of them, he used to call them his masters. He loved them for their innocence, and was sometimes heard to exclaim, "Oh, how I wish I were like those little ones!" His love was, moreover, the outcome of an affectionate pity for their tender age and the dangers to which they were exposed. Occasionally when he was out walking he happened to come across little children in tears, or who had lost their way; he would at once stop to speak to them, comfort them with kindly words, pick them up if they had fallen, and wipe their soiled garments and tearful faces with the gentle attention a mother might bestow. Once he was passing by a house and heard a poor little baby crying with all its might; he looked in at the door, and, seeing that no one was at home, he went in very quietly and began to rock the cradle to pacify it; then he took a cup off the shelf, got some water, and now and then moistened the infant's parched lips with his finger. Nearly an hour had passed when the mother came back and found him thus engaged, but before leaving he reproved her in a grave though kindly way, telling her she ought to take better care of her little son. Such would have been the conduct of a Vincent de Paul, Joseph Calasanctius, or Philip Neri, and indeed of Him Who embraced the little ones and blessed them, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

II. A higher form of charity is intellectual charity, for it is a greater work to feed the mind with truth than to give bread to the hungry. Father Rosmini loved truth as a light from Heaven, and if it was a pleasure to discover and possess it, it was a still greater pleasure to make it known to others. At the age of seventeen he wrote to

a friend: "Whatever little knowledge I may by God's assistance acquire, I intend to employ for the instruction of others." He was faithful to this resolution; for he was liberal, even prodigal, in imparting to others the treasures of learning which he began so early to accumulate, and which went on increasing day by day almost unconsciously through the wonderful working of his mind. Although he set great store by time, he bestowed long hours on correspondence and conversation with his friends, and not unfrequently with strangers who came to consult him, for he looked upon it as a holy work to dispel an error, a prejudice, a doubt, or to make a ray of truth penetrate into souls. He expressed his opinions with confidence, not fearing that others would enrich themselves at his expense; on the contrary, it was the keenest pleasure to him to see that his thoughts were understood and accepted as true. His joy was equally great when he perceived some spark of latent truth in the remarks of others; he immediately set to work to free it from the obscurity in which it was involved, and then, placing it in its full light, he ascribed all the credit to the person who had uttered the remark, without suspecting, probably, that so much truth was to be found in it. "I have never met a man," wrote Tommaseo, "who welcomed every hint of the true or the beautiful with such joyous affection, and the more sublime the conception the greater was his joy, but its grandeur he measured, with generous illusion, by his own sense and understanding of the subject." Fully convinced that good proceeds from truth alone, and that it is, in fact, truth loved and made fruitful by the ardour of affection, he was never tired of preaching to all, especially to his spiritual children, the necessity of gathering up the truth with reverence and love, that the smallest particle might not be lost. For the same reason he urged his friends not to allow the light of the intellect to remain idle, for, being a light from God, it should be employed to spread around the splendour of truth. Hence he recommended Cesari to

translate the *Confessions* of St. Augustine into Italian, and Fontana the *City of God* by the same saint, Tommaseo the *Dialogues* of Plato, and Bonghi the works of Aristotle, to which he would supply explanatory notes. He also suggested to Tommaseo that he should write on the immortal life of Christianity ; he urged Carlo Rosmini to write a history of the principal saints, Cantù a *Universal History of the Church*, Balbo, a work on politics, Manzoni, philosophical dialogues on *Pleasure* and on the *Unity of Ideas ;* nor did he fail to reprove Stefani and others who allowed their intelligence to lie idle instead of producing the fruit it might have yielded. As the gifts of mind were in his eyes an alms from God Who bestows them, so he looked on wise and useful intellectual work as an alms given to men ; hence in his diary he mentions the writing of books as a work of charity. Therefore the voluminous works he wrote, so amazing to our littleness, and the many thousands of letters he has left behind, were to him but one long and laborious exercise of wise charity. Moreover, Father Rosmini always directed this form of charity and even corporal works to the spiritual benefit of those whom he assisted ; for the help afforded to our neighbour in his wants, whether physical or mental, is useless and often pernicious, unless it tends to make him morally and supernaturally good and dear to God.

III. Following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who promoted the salvation of souls by healing the body and by the teaching of truth, Father Rosmini endeavoured to do good to souls by helping men in their corporal and intellectual necessities, and he wished the members of the Institute to keep the same object in view, that every work of charity might finally become a spiritual work. He expressed this in a sentence which at first sight would appear to be a paradox : " It may be said that all the members of the Institute are engaged in the care of souls, because all their employments have the good of souls for their final end." For this purpose he sought to combine,

as far as possible, the performance of the minor works of charity with the higher forms of spiritual charity. For instance, it was his custom to instruct the poor of Calvario and Trent in the truths of faith before he distributed the food prepared for them. Again, when he went, as a young priest, to visit the prisoners at Innsbruck, he felt their sufferings deeply and tried to suggest to them some comforting thoughts in a short exhortation, proving that man is made unhappy by turning away from God, whereas the friendship of God will make him truly happy. On all occasions, whether he was occupied in relieving distress of mind or body, his thoughts always soared above the earth and carried the reflections of the sufferer to heaven. He looked upon the pastoral ministry as the highest work of charity, and considered it the summit of the charitable labours of the Institute. We have seen how much good he effected in that capacity in one short year at Rovereto. He showed the same zeal for souls in many other circumstances, especially when he quitted the important and pressing occupation of his studies to direct retreats for the clergy and seculars, both in public and in private, as well as to guide pious souls in the way of perfection by word of mouth or by his letters, which are a treasury of Christian direction in the practice of virtue. We need only mention here two acts of zealous charity by which he endeavoured to draw back to God two souls, who for different reasons had strayed from Him. Deeply afflicted at seeing the Abbé Lammenais hurried on by the devil to his eternal ruin through pride, he made an effort to save him and wrote him a letter full of reverent and tender affection in 1837, hoping to soothe his irritated mind and induce him to seek safety in the arms of Christ and the bosom of the true Church. Another letter was addressed by him to Dr. Pusey in 1843 to assist him to snap the slender thread that still bound him to Anglicanism, and enter courageously into the Roman Catholic Church. Both these letters remained unanswered, yet Father Rosmini, obeying the im-

pulse of his heart, certainly performed an act of sublime charity and acquired great merit in the sight of God.

One word in conclusion on the Rosminian Colleges. Rosmini had felt from childhood that, if great and lasting good is to be effected, it must be done by combining and directing the energies of many towards one object: this was the scope of his Vannettian Academy, Society of Friends, Printing Society, Association for producing a Christian Encyclopedia, and similar projects. Later on his thoughts were directed to the establishment of three Colleges, viz., the Medical College, the College for Elementary Masters, and the College for Missionaries, which would answer to the three forms of charity. The Medical College of St. Raphael, intended for the care of the sick and the improvement of medical science and practice, was to be chiefly a work of corporal charity. The request for this foundation came from Prince Ernest d'Aremberg, who gave half a million francs for the purpose. Father Rosmini drew up the Statutes, and presented them three times to the Cardinals for approval, receiving each time only fair words and a "Postponement," until at last, suspecting that the opposition came from suspicions aroused against himself, and hearing from Cardinal Castracane that this really was the case, he made no further attempt. We must not omit to mention a proposal to unite this work with that of the Venerable Cottolengo, though it eventually fell through. The College of Elementary Masters, under the patronage of Mary Immaculate and St. Joseph Calasanctius, has in view the instruction and education of children and is chiefly a work of intellectual charity. Father Rosmini wrote the Statutes, watched over its beginnings, and diligently laboured for its welfare as long as he lived, and had the consolation of seeing it increase and prosper under the blessing of God. The College or Congregation of Missionaries, established at San Michele della Chiusa under the protection of our Lady, St. Michael, and St. Alphonsus Liguori, is an eminently spiritual work of charity. In 1846

Mgr. Odone, Bishop of Susa, approved the Statutes and introduced it into his diocese, where, for many years, the Fathers of the Institute, in company with the parish priests of the neighbourhood, went about giving missions far and near, reaping abundant fruit. Father Rosmini's ideas comprised undertakings still more vast, such as a college dedicated to the twelve Apostles, for England and her Colonies, especially for India, and he laid his plans for foreign missions before Father Pagani and Mgr. Luquet at great length in his letters, explaining them still further to Father Paoli by word of mouth. Many other plans for the good of mankind presented themselves to him ; some of these he exerted himself to realise, because it is a real good to attempt a good work or even to form the design of it. But God, who is pleased sometimes to inspire His servants with noble thoughts and to aid them in the work, may yet allow them to fail, in order to preserve their merit from the taint of vanity and to render their virtue more perfect and sublime.

Love for Friends.—As the sun sheds its rays over all things, and yet concentrates on some a more vivid light and more intense heat; so charity, which extends to all men, concentrates its affections upon some in particular, and this affection, when it is mutual, gives rise to Christian friendship —one of the most beautiful forms of charity. Friendship, always holy and beautiful, has become still more admirable and holy since Jesus, the Divine teacher of charity, condescended to give His disciples the name of friends and to love St. John with a special love beyond the others.

Antonio Rosmini delighted in Christian friendship from his early years, often sought it with humble dignity, accepted it gratefully when offered, and always cultivated it, not so much from an instinct of the heart as through a formed resolve to do good. Faithful to the laws of true friendship, he observed them with conscientious punctuality, almost to a scruple, without any regard to his own

convenience. "My heart would travel to the end of the world to see a friend," he wrote to one of them; "but," he added immediately, "only if God wills, for my heart shall never have the supreme command." Being endowed with singular delicacy of feeling, he would contrive to send his friend a word of consolation, when distance, change of circumstances, or the prudence required by his responsibilities left him no other opportunity of professing his friendship; and he sometimes reminded a friend of their mutual affection by introducing his Christian name in some work, if he could not add the surname, saluting him in that way as the early Christians used to do by way of remembrance. His intercourse with his friends was easy and natural, and he liked them to be unconstrained with him. "I cannot stand on ceremony with real friends," he said; and he one day gently reproved a friend who was too formal, saying, "When there is not an open heart, friendship is imperfect." Their strictures never offended him; indeed, he humbly asked them to correct him, and when they did so he gladly and gratefully accepted the reproof. "I make no account of praise, generally speaking," he said, "but the advice, the admonitions, even the reproofs of my friends—these never deceive; they bear the stamp of sincerity; they are gifts from the heart." His friendship was not weak or sentimental, because it was founded on charity and its vigour made it enduring. Although he had the highest esteem for his friends, this did not hinder him from seeing their faults, noting them and correcting them too, when necessary; now openly, now covertly, occasionally with a look or sign, and at times only by silence. "His pure soul," said Tommaseo, "penetrated my disorderly one, and without any words we understood each other. One day, on a sudden, he said to me with heartfelt tenderness, 'It is hard for thee to kick against the goad.' And too truly have I experienced this, for when I have done wrong God has always visited me with punishment; not by angry retribution, but by a

prompt and loving admonition. O admirable man, a pillar of light, as it were, on my path!" His candour in pointing out the faults of his friends could be illustrated by many examples, but one will be sufficient. In 1852, when debates were being carried on in the Italian parliament about a new law respecting civil marriages, the Marchese Gustavo di Cavour spoke in its favour, though he afterwards voted against it. Rosmini grieved at this occurrence, and sent his friend some arguments in writing to help him to escape from the error into which he had fallen, perhaps through want of caution. The dispute was not settled for a couple of years, as the Marchese could not see his mistake, and during all this time the Father did not consider himself at liberty to hear his confession, candidly saying, "I should be afraid of offending God if I were unfaithful to my ministry, and I should only do harm to one whom I ought to love and do still love as a friend with a very special love." How few there are who understand the duties of Christian friendship and practise it in this manner!

Love for Relatives.—It is an old calumny, uttered by those who do not know the Christian religion and its laws of love, that to leave our parents for the love of God is a want of affection for them; yet the truth is, that religion, far from destroying lawful affections, brings them into harmony with Divine charity, takes from them all that is earthly, and raises them to a height that is heavenly.

Father Rosmini's soul, with its wealth of affection and the intensity of its love, was deeply attached to his family; and when God called him to leave all and surround himself with another family, his heart still retained and cherished his home affections. There is no need to recall the reverent love he showed to his aged father by giving him a minute account of his studies and all his affairs, nor his almost filial love of his uncle Ambrogio, who had educated him from childhood in the love of the beautiful, nor the holy

ties that bound him to his sister Margherita, the saintly companion of his early years, whose loss was such a grief to him. I will, however, say something of his love for his brother Giuseppe and his mother, with whom he lived longest.

My readers will not have forgotten his deep concern for his brother's welfare in his boyhood, and his patient endurance under the suffering his efforts brought upon him; this anxiety did not become less as time wore on. He endeavoured, by occasional visits and frequent letters full of loving counsel, to dissipate the clouds of sadness that afflicted Giuseppe and led him to take the darkest views of persons and things; he tried to strengthen his brother's mind against the delusions of his imagination, and to free him from the fever of self-interest which narrowed his heart, that he might make him more benevolent, more sociable, more of a man. In particular, when Giuseppe made up his mind to settle down in life, he assisted him by wise advice as to his choice of a companion, and the dispositions in which he ought to enter on his new state. The arrangements took time, for Giuseppe was extremely wanting in decision of character; but at last his choice fell on the Baroness Adelaide Cristani of Rallo, a lady who was everything that could be desired. Father Rosmini, perceiving that his brother was too irresolute to arrange his affairs, considered it a duty of charity to go to the Tyrol to attend to them, though it was both irksome and inconvenient to him. He accompanied him to Mezzo-Lombardo to draw up the marriage contract, and then to Mezzotedesco, where, on the 12th of April 1842, the marriage took place. The ceremony was performed by Father Rosmini, who blessed the bride and bridegroom, and preached a beautiful discourse on the obligations of the conjugal state and the graces of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

His filial affection for his mother was so full of reverence that we may call it a kind of worship. When the Divine

Will called him away from her, he would write with all the ingenuity of charity to console her for their separation; now sending her a little photograph, and again giving a minute description of the places he visited, now playfully jesting about his ailments, but more frequently raising her thoughts with his own to supernatural reflections, and reminding her that in God they were always united, notwithstanding the distance which separated them—an anticipation here below of the blessed and eternal union in heaven. Yet in all these affectionate and consoling letters, one cannot but note an echo of Christ's words to His Mother, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" He never tired of recommending his brother, who was at home, to keep her company, to be kind to her, to console her in the last years of her life, that he might receive the blessings of God promised to true filial love, both in this world and in the next. "I beg you to visit our dear mother as often as you can," he wrote to Giuseppe; "entertain yourself with her and enjoy her company while you have her. Large-hearted people are scarce in this world, and they are a treasure. You may say that I do not set you a good example on this point, but remember that I have received the tonsure, and have said, 'The Lord is the portion of my inheritance!' Sweet inheritance of the new family into which our Lord has admitted me!" He also entreated his Roveretan friends to go and see his mother frequently; and, as he had property in the Tyrol, he himself went back from time to time to pay her consoling visits. It was a subject of great edification to the servants and strangers to see his behaviour towards her on those occasions; he would serve her at table, kiss her hand, and ask her blessing as he had done when a little child. Some years before her death Giovanna Rosmini had the great consolation of being ascribed to the Institute of Charity, thus becoming the spiritual child of him who was her son in the natural order; and when God called her to Himself on the 15th January 1842, the Father

recommended her to the prayers of his spiritual children and friends in the words of sad and holy affection with which St. Augustine in his *Confessions* commends to his readers the memory of his mother, St. Monica.

Love for His Spiritual Children.—I must here touch upon an affection more exalted in its nature and origin than the tie of flesh and blood; I speak of affection founded on a spiritual tie. From the day that Father Rosmini, under the gentle guidance of Providence, found himself the father of a little religious family, he loved it with a holy affection; and when the will of the Sovereign Pontiff, which was the Will of God for him, confided its government to him for life, he felt still more strongly the bonds of spiritual paternity and the ineffable joy which accompanies it. The sons whom God had given to him held the first place in his thoughts; they enjoyed the right to his affection, and he considered the best part of his time and strength to be their due. If any one of them expressed a desire to see their Father he might go to him freely at any hour of the day, certain of a ready and cordial welcome; whether priest or lay-brother, an old Father or a novice, the door was open to him. Sometimes, when he was writing or dictating the subjects he had meditated on during his wakeful nights—and these hours devoted to writing were most valuable—there would be a knock at the door. "Come in," he would answer at once. Then, with a tranquil expression he would receive the intruder, who had come perhaps about some trifle, listen to all he had to say without sign of impatience or annoyance, and dismiss him satisfied and at peace. Brothers would go to him sometimes when he was engaged in learned conversation with his friends; and he was at once prepared to leave his conversation and give the audience. "I am here for you, my son," he said to a young scholastic, leaving his friends immediately; and, as the young man apologised for the interruption, he replied: "Oh! these gentlemen can

entertain each other, but your business is of more importance to me." The Father was almost always present at the Community recreation, and adapted himself with great simplicity to the companions sent him by Providence; his demeanour was so gentle and engaging that even the most reserved were encouraged to overcome their bashfulness and open their minds to him with childlike candour. One day his companion happened to be a young novice of fifteen, who frankly told the Father his greatest trouble; it was that he was so short and did not grow fast enough. The Father smiled and said: "Do not lose heart, my dear brother, for you may become a great saint although you are not tall." Then he began to tell him how St. Antoninus went to ask for the Dominican habit, and was refused because he was so young and so short of stature; but the Superiors, to make the refusal less pointed, having told him that they could not receive him until he had learnt Gratian's decree off by heart, he came back the following year, his task completed, was received into the Order, and became a great Saint, as every one knows. Needless to say the little novice was greatly consoled by this conversation.

Father Rosmini's love for his spiritual children was chiefly shown in the way he provided for their necessities of body and soul. He wished the Superiors to have the compassion of true fathers and mothers for their subjects, to take care of their health, to supply their needs, and, if possible, to anticipate their wants so as to prevent fault-finding or discontent. Fearing that some, moved by misguided zeal or too ardent a desire of mortification, might treat themselves too rigorously, he was careful to restrain them. "I beg you," he wrote to Father Lowenbruck, "I entreat you, and, if I could, I would command you, not to be in want of things for fear of spending too much." He required very special attention to be paid to the sick; the Superior was to visit them frequently, to see that they had proper food and medicine provided, and that everything was nicely prepared. When there were any sick in

the house, he visited them, and, after minute inquiries about their maladies and the treatment employed for their cure, recommended all to bestow the utmost care upon them. It was remarked that on entering the sick-room he always uncovered his head, as though to venerate Jesus Christ in the person of the invalid. One day, to make the infirmarian realise the beauty and the dignity of his office, he quoted the text, *Infirmus eram et visitastis me,* and, perceiving that the brother did not understand the Latin text, he went on to give him an explanation of it.

In providing for the needs of souls his care was still more assiduous and compassionate. Innumerable letters, spiritual counsels and instructions of all kinds calculated to lead his children to sanctity, remain to us as irrefragable proofs of his charity towards them. Knowing that a religious can only attain sanctity by the path of obedience, he advised Superiors to employ every means in order to make their subjects perfect in this virtue ; but, as obedience is a chain galling to human nature and a weight which seems oppressive unless love makes it light, he recommended superiors to make them love the virtue by their sweetness of manner and to give their commands with discretion. They ought, he said, to adapt the commands to the strength of their subjects, not only to their physical and intellectual powers but to their moral strength as well. When there was a deficiency in any of these points, the Superior should assist their subjects by enlightening, directing, and strengthening their wills until they were able to bear a greater burden ; for in this way God Himself acts towards man, not exposing us to temptations which we are unable to resist, but supplying us with strength to overcome them. It was his custom to require a minute account of the progress of each brother, of his state of health, of his studies, and especially of his advancement in virtue. A good report, especially with regard to spiritual proficiency, filled him with joy, which was expressed more by the gladness that beamed from his countenance than by

his words; while, on the other hand, an unfavourable account pierced him to the heart. One of the Elementary masters came to visit him during the vacation, and the first questions put by the Father were, whether they lived in brotherly charity and how the spiritual duties were performed, especially the short monthly retreat. The brother having replied, as if through shyness, that they did them as best they could, the Father said quickly: "The duties towards God are not to be done just as you can, but with the greatest fervour, especially by the Elementary masters, who have so much need of the Divine assistance in the dangers that surround them, and without which they can do no good work."

Father Rosmini's devoted care of the Sisters of Providence was prompted by the same holy affection, because they also were his spiritual children. Their daily increasing number added greatly to his responsibilities of government; but his esteem of their virtues and the affection he bore them lightened his burdens. He never spared himself if he could assist them in any way; not content with directing them by letter, he often spent hours conversing with them, instructing them and consoling them. When they were sick he visited them, and his words had a wonderful power to give comfort. "It seemed to me," said one of them, "that half my sickness had gone; his words brought me such relief." Hearing that one of the Sisters was taken ill late at night, Father Gilardi hastened to go and administer the last Sacraments, but Father Rosmini himself was there in a short time to make sure that she had every consolation.

It is no wonder that such a good Father was beloved by his children, and that their affection, far from being diminished by the lapse of years, does but grow the stronger.

Love for Enemies.—The most difficult exercise of the precept of charity is the love of enemies; and one who

sincerely loves them from his heart may indeed be certain that he possesses the charity of Christ. By enemies I here mean those who attacked Father Rosmini, now openly and again in secret, either in writing or by word of mouth, and unjustly damaged his reputation or his undertakings: I will not decide whether their acts were the result of malice or mistake, but will leave that to the decision of Him who alone judges the hearts of men. That he had such enemies I need not inform any one who has followed the thread of this history; let us now see how he behaved towards them.

Attacked on all sides, and often in such an underhand way that he could not possibly escape the blow or defend himself, the holy man must have suffered acutely, not so much on account of the injury done to his reputation as because of the harm done to his beloved Institute; and this sorrow was intensified by knowing who were the authors of his tribulation. "If my enemy had reviled me," he said sadly, "I would indeed have borne it, but thou, a man of one mind with me, my guide and my familiar!" Still his grief had no disturbance in it, no anger, no bitterness. His upright soul, unable to alter the facts, excused the intention by ascribing it to true zeal. "My sorrow is alleviated (these are his words) when I consider that they who assail me, though in such an unbecoming fashion, are in some way moved by zeal for the purity of the faith, a thing most precious." He inspired his spiritual children with the same lenient judgment. One day when Father Molinari, speaking of *Eusebio Cristiano*, allowed the expression "What malice!" to escape him, the Father reproved him, saying: "Who has made you the judge of men's consciences? The utmost you can say is that they are ignorant." To Father Paoli, who remarked that bitter zeal cannot come from truth, he replied: "If you had a good heart, you would not speak in that way"; and on another occasion: "Let us not usurp the judgment of God; let us neither judge nor condemn any one." He was never

heard to utter words of resentment or to blame those who persecuted him, nor would he allow others to do so. He begged his sister-in-law not to let people speak against them in her presence, and when Gioberti published his work entitled the *Modern Jesuit*, Father Rosmini was grieved. Being asked by one of his sons to let him have it to read, he refused decidedly, saying, "I have buried that daring and slanderous book, and it shall never rise again as far as I am concerned." He did not even like his opponents to be called enemies, and when some one called them so, he interrupted him. "Call them adversaries," he said; "as for enemies, I know of none." Father Villoresi, who was his guest at Rovereto just when *Eusebio Cristiano* and other anonymous calumniators attacked him so unfeelingly, writes thus of our beloved Father: "He was always mild to all, his countenance always expressing the serenity and peace with which his heart overflowed; never at any time did I see the least cloud upon his brow to mar its perfect calm, nor did he ever utter a harsh word against those who inflicted such cruel injuries upon him, but he earnestly recommended to all the charity of Christ." Ten years later, when the assaults were renewed with greater violence, Father De Vit asked him what he thought of all this fighting. "They are hot-headed," he replied. It would seem that the breath of persecution, instead of cooling charity in his heart, made it burn still more brightly. His prayers were daily offered for his persecutors, and amongst his ejaculatory prayers occurs this one, breathing the incense of most benignant charity: "Grant, O Lord, that I may be in agreement with all those with whom Thou seest that I do agree."

To render good for evil inflicted on us is the most certain proof of sincere love for our enemies, and opportunities were not wanting to Father Rosmini of evincing the sincerity of his charity. When he heard that Gioberti in his exile was feeling the pressure of poverty, forgetting the

violence of his fiery opponent, he offered to assist him on condition that the name of his benefactor should be kept secret; and at the first tidings of his sudden death, he invoked the blessing of peace on that sad and weary soul, and offered up for him the Divine Victim immolated for the sins and weaknesses of mankind. Towards the close of 1847 it happened that the religious Order which had issued *Eusebio* and works of the like character was persecuted in Switzerland and forced to leave the country. Father Rosmini welcomed the fugitives as brethren, received twenty-four of them into his house at Stresa, entertained and comforted them, and kept seven of the oldest and most feeble with him for a month or more, treating them with the most cordial charity. The Liberal party expressed displeasure at this; some warned him that he would draw down persecution and misfortune on his Institute, but he replied with words worthy of a saint: "If charity should occasion the destruction of the Institute, it will have attained its end, which is, to be sacrificed through charity." Later on, when these religious wrote to thank him for his generous hospitality, he replied, "In such a case as this, I ought rather to give thanks to Providence than receive thanks for what I have done." Thus did this great servant of God fulfil to the letter in every particular the precept of the Lord: "I say to you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that persecute you and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father Who is in Heaven."

II. The Cardinal and Other Virtues

Justice.—Justice, the first of the cardinal virtues, consists in giving to every one his due. Father Rosmini, who held that right is never separated from the moral law which teaches all men to respect it, considered every right a holy thing because of its intimate connection with the law, which is divine. Thus he considered no precaution too great to

prevent the danger of violating rights, and the least apprehension of such a danger made him fear. He once told Tommaseo that he had purposely given up a valuable portion of his property to avoid entrusting it to a person on whom he could not rely. This he did, not so much through fear of being cheated by the unreliable agent, as to escape the temptation to suspect him wrongfully or misjudge him; for in his eyes it was a less evil to lose a great part of his income than to live in constant suspicion, which is insupportable torment to one who has a sense of the dignity of man. When Brother Carli was with him at Rome, the good Tyrolese, noticing all the strangers that came to pay their respects to him as a future Cardinal, kept on saying: "Father, be on your guard against those people; they have only come to see how the land lies, or perhaps to draw you out!" On this the Father gently reproved him, saying: "You must be kind; why do you pass such judgments?" He used to say that rash judgments, being so easily formed, are dangerous snares to the soul, and he wished to fill every one with horror of them. As a means of avoiding such faults, he recommended that we should always view our neighbour in the most favourable light and allow charity to have complete control of our mind. "Even if there should be some mistake in our judgment," he said, "it is always a fortunate mistake, meritorious for the one who makes it and calculated to promote union amongst men." To a young girl of fourteeen who once asked him for some words of advice which might be helpful all her life through, he said, after a moment's recollection, "Remember always to reflect a great deal before you speak, and even if what you intend to say appears to be right and true, still wait a little while: you will in this way avoid rash judgments." The young girl took his precious counsel to heart, and became a truly gentle soul, full of benevolence towards all.

Father Rosmini's fear of detracting, even in thought, from the esteem due to others frequently led him to enter-

tain a higher opinion of people than they deserved. He was not blind to their defects, but without pausing to consider their shortcomings he passed on to their good qualities, which his goodness of heart led him to exaggerate. Entirely free from envy, that vice which narrows the heart and mind, he rejoiced at every good trait he perceived in other people, even his adversaries or the most ill-disposed persons, just as if it were his own ; he would remark it and point it out as an example with the utmost delight. Speaking to Father Signini about a book written by one of the Jesuits, he said with perfect candour, " I consider it the best book on that subject that has appeared in the present century." When he was sending Father Setti to Rome, he strongly recommended him to observe and imitate the holy men he would meet there, and to study attentively the religious discipline of the Jesuits and their method of training the young. He sent Brother Lugan to Turin to learn from the Christian Brothers how to manage children and bring them up well ; some of the Sisters also at his desire visited the infants' schools at Milan, with a view to adopting what was best in their system. When writing from Rome to his religious, he continually praised the religious houses of the city as models of recollection, strict observance, and devotion. Being once asked by a Tyrolese lady where she should send her sons to be educated, he said, without a moment's hesitation," If the Jesuits had any colleges in Austria, I should advise you to choose one of their houses, because I consider them the best educators. As that is not possible, send your sons to the Barnabites." Far from fearing lest his own light should be clouded by the light of others, he directed all his efforts to keep himself in the shade that they might appear to advantage ; and, although he was gifted with creative genius, he laid no claim to originality but modestly styled himself translator and interpreter of the wisdom of the ancients. Many discoveries in the field of science were clearly and incontestably his own, yet it was marvellous

to see how he would contrive to find traces and germs of the same in tradition, and, with a more elegant comparison than Socrates, he declared that his office was to bring them out of the shell like the poor hen hatching chickens. On the same grounds he would never allow himself to be called Founder of the two Institutes of Charity and Providence. The first time he heard the name of Rosminians given to his spiritual children, he was horrified, and wrote a Circular to the Superiors, forbidding them to use the title as "incongruous and unlawful," and directing them, moreover, to prevent its use, even by externs, if possible. The Founder of the Sisters, he said, was Father Lowenbruck, who certainly did gather the first few together. But who gave them their rules? Who was it that gave the Institute its form and spirit? Was it not Father Rosmini? About the Institute of Charity he one day said very decidedly to Father Signini, "It was not I who composed the Constitutions; the design of the Institute, except a few accessory matters, was given to me as it is described in that book." He also said to Father Paoli: "The Founders of the Institute are three: St. Augustine, whose spirit should be ours in the exercise of the twofold precept of charity as explained in his works; St. Ignatius, in respect to the government of the Institute; and St. Francis of Sales, who is to be our model in his spirit of singular meekness and affability in daily intercourse." The better to shelter himself from observation under the shadow of these great saints, he frequently quotes literally from their writings in the Rules and Constitutions, and when Father Paoli asked him why he kept faithfully to certain expressions which might easily have been improved, he answered, "Because they are the words of saints." On this point he appeared at times to be almost scrupulous; as, for instance, when the alteration of a phrase in the Rule was suggested because it was not good Latin, he decided to leave the quotation as it stood in the Rule of St. Benedict, out of veneration for the saintly author. Certain

it is that when founding the Institute he profited very much by the treasures these great saints had amassed, and it would have been folly to neglect such an opportunity; but it is equally certain that to the riches bequeathed by these holy men, he added a valuable store of new treasures, according to the gift he had received from God. His reverence for the great Founders who had preceded him is therefore all the more admirable, especially in these days when the work of bygone ages is regarded with sovereign contempt by some, who forget that the riches with which the present decks itself so proudly are mainly the inheritance of the past.

The same love of justice which made Father Rosmini so careful not to infringe the rights of others and so generous in acknowledging and stating their rights, urged him to defend them courageously whenever he saw them assailed. By nature, as well as of set purpose, he was averse to all kinds of disputes; yet he would fearlessly come forward to defend, by word and writing, the rights of justice when they were threatened, and to avenge them when they were contemned; nor did he shrink from appealing to the law on certain occasions to repress the audacity of insolent men. When a certain priest, who had left the Institute through some eccentricity, made some unjust and exorbitant demands for money, Father Rosmini brought the case before the ecclesiastical tribunal and plainly stated the circumstances, offering at the same time to pay over the sum of money to the claimant, not as his due, but as an alms. On another occasion at Stresa, when some persons of consideration artfully obtained from him the key of a tribune in the church and refused to give it back, he proved his right to it in the court of justice; but when the key had been restored, he immediately returned it to the persons in question, proving that he had not appealed to the law through covetousness or desire of revenge, but simply from love of justice. Again, when a handful of roughs surrounded his house at Stresa by night, and, not

content with invectives, began to hurl stones and damage the wall, he brought the matter before the authorities, so as to put a stop to such outrages ; but, when the offenders had been sentenced to punishment, he interceded so effectually on their behalf as to obtain their release. Of St. Augustine, St. Francis of Sales, St. Alphonsus Liguori, and other saints it is related that they availed themselves of the aid of the law in like manner to secure their rights, and at the same time mitigated its severity by their charity.

Gratitude, also, is part of justice, for it consists in a glad and affectionate recognition of benefits received. This great virtue has a beauty of its own to which the proud are insensible, but it attracted Father Rosmini's heart by a sweet and powerful impulse, which he manifested by the most delicate acts of courtesy. He cherished the remembrance of every act of kindness conferred on him, and took care to cultivate gratitude as a hospitable tree under whose refreshing shade the poor pilgrim may rest awhile on his journey through the desert of this life. He was deeply grateful to his parents, to his masters, to his relatives, and to strangers for every service they rendered him, even the very least ; he loved them in return with an affection proportionate to their claims and thanked them heartily. The tutor of his early years and the old servants of the family were kept in the house as long as they lived ; he always remembered them with pleasure, and amidst the pressure of business found a few moments to write some words of consolation to his old nurse in reply to her letters ; for good Teresa Tacchelli—whom he used to call *la decana*, because she took charge of him as an infant—was accustomed to scrawl a few words now and then and send them to the " master " in token of her affection. His gratitude, however, was not bounded by the circle of mere personal benefits ; he was grateful to all who had benefited the human race by material or intellectual labours, and he endeavoured to instil into every one, especially his religious children, a sense of gratitude similar to his own, towards

those whose works had in any way helped his Institute. At the beginning of the *Constitutions* he expresses his desire that whatever good there is in the Institute may be ascribed to the light of the Holy Spirit which shone forth in the holy Founders of religious orders, from whom it has come to us as an inheritance. Hence he addresses himself to God in these words, *Haereditate acquisivi testimonia Tua*, and he requires his religious to testify their special gratitude to those Founders and their Institutes. "It seems to me," he wrote to one of them with gentle firmness, "that you allow yourself to censure religious orders, especially the one to which we are most indebted, because it has furnished us with so many beautiful rules. I earnestly entreat you to correct this fault and make a cross on your tongue. Believe me, this matter is important for the sake of charity, of edification, of gratitude —because we are the offspring of all the other Orders—and of prudence." In the *Constitutions* he prescribes how the debt of gratitude to the benefactors of the Institute, both living and dead, is to be discharged, whether by prayers in suffrage for their souls or by marks of honour; it is, moreover, laid down that the duty of gratitude should not be overlooked when works of charity are offered for acceptance. His lofty view of this virtue is evident in an order given by him, on occasion of his visit to the House of Tamié in Savoy: "I desire," he wrote, "that the first founders of the house of Tamié should be held in veneration. Many saints have dwelt in this house before us, and here their remains are laid: we must cherish special devotion towards them and often recommend ourselves to their prayers, that they may obtain God's blessing for this place where they attained such sanctity. Let us look upon them as our Fathers, for the Institute of Charity is the descendant of all the religious Institutes that have preceded it; it must be Cistercian with the Cistercians, and consider itself bound by family ties with all religious Institutes. In token of our gratitude, therefore, to the

holy religious men who flourished in this monastery and may not yet have reached their heavenly home, I ordain that on the first semidouble after the feast of St. Peter II., the founder of this house, a Requiem mass shall be celebrated by the Superior of the house, or another priest in his place, in suffrage for those souls." Surely this is an instance of the most refined and thoughtful exercise of gratitude, and we may conclude that the benignity of his disposition and his rare delicacy of perception enabled him to discover moral ties and connections which would escape the notice of ordinary men.

Humility.—The humble man sincerely attributes all his defects to himself and all his good qualities to God alone; therefore humility is, in fact, the practical recognition of the truth; it is perfect justice, because it makes us just towards ourselves and just towards God. Father Rosmini's humility was most profound, because his knowledge of human nature was so deep and his conception of God so enlightened. The creature is of itself mere nothingness; its being is a gift from God, the self-existing Being, who gives being to whom He pleases, and in the measure which pleases Him. Hence the Apostle unhesitatingly asks, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" The humble Father was so convinced of this truth that he could not in the least imagine how any man in his right senses could give way to pride, unless he were half asleep or blinded by passion. It seemed to him so natural to be humble that he frankly told Father Molinari that temptations to pride troubled him least; they seemed to him so stupid and so ridiculous. On being asked what was the best way to fight against them, he replied, "Pass them by," which meant that they were to be despised. He was aware that God's gifts had been bountifully bestowed upon him, nor did he deny the fact, for humility does not consist in doing so; but, just because they were gifts, he attributed them to the Giver, he reflected on the obligation of employing them well, and

humbled himself beneath those who were less favoured, so that his very greatness became a shield and defence against vanity. Fully convinced that he was the least amongst his brethren, an atrocious sinner, full of indescribable wickedness, he blamed himself for all the evils that befell the Institute and the Church. "My wretchedness and sinfulness are such," he wrote to a friend, "that they are sufficient to bring ruin on the whole world." To another he writes: "I only create obstacles by my inexpressible unworthiness." Again: "My sins are the sole cause of the evils that afflict the Institute"; and at another time he wrote: "Who knows whether my sins may not prevent the fullness of the Divine mercy from being poured out upon the Church?" Amongst his ejaculations is this one: "O my God, I am wicked, most wicked; I condemn myself. Do Thou save me." Many will wonder that a man whose life appeared utterly blameless to his most intimate friends could see so much evil in himself; but those who are accustomed to the language of the saints will feel no surprise. St. Vincent of Paul attributed the failings of his companions to his own bad example; St. Bernard besought God not to punish the countries through which he passed; and St. Teresa blamed herself for the disturbances raised in Germany by an apostate monk. The saints viewed themselves in the brightness of eternal light, before which all created light is obscured, and in this Divine light their little faults and imperfections, even the limitations of human nature, appeared gloomy and dark. Father Rosmini, on his part, was certain, from the joy he experienced in realising and acknowledging his own unworthiness, that he was not deceived by his feelings. "My unworthiness is so great that I am unable to fathom it," he writes; "and the proof of this truth is the joy I feel at the thought, because joy springs from truth alone, and God never allows it to arise from error."

Pride disguised under the cloak of humility soon betrays itself and comes out in its true colours; only the man who

is humble in his inmost heart can by word and action prove constant in the practice of solid humility. Such a man was Father Rosmini. No word in his own praise ever fell from his lips, and he received in bashful silence the praise bestowed on him by others. He rarely spoke of himself and his affairs, and when he was obliged to speak of them, he did it without boasting or self-complacency. "In him," said one of his spiritual sons, "self-complacency seemed to be dead." Never did he allude to his noble lineage, the riches he had inherited, or the honourable titles of which the world is so proud; if they were mentioned he would make them a subject of ridicule. For instance, some one reminded him that he was a *Cavaliere;* he replied that he was a cavalier without a horse. To another who remarked that he had written a great deal, he replied that it was one of his bad habits. A lady having asked in astonishment how he managed to write so many books, his answer was, "Very much in the same way that you knit stockings." Of his books he seldom spoke; still more rarely did he suggest that any one should read them. Averse to engaging in scientific discussions, he was always more inclined to listen than to speak, and, when he expressed his opinions, he did so with great moderation, never in a dogmatic way or as if seeking to impose them on his hearers, though he was fully persuaded of their truth and could ably defend them. "He was a man of letters and remarkable for his erudition," writes one of his first companions at Trent, "well versed in every branch of science and holding a high position, yet he never allowed any sign of these qualifications to appear; he was as unassuming as a person without means or talent. In theological questions he was quite pleased to attend to our absurdities, and, if it were useful, he would solve our doubts with the utmost patience and kindness." It was painful to him whenever he was unable to agree with the spoken or written views of learned or holy people. On these occasions he endeavoured to interpret their thought, to

clear it up, to complete it, or to improve the form in which it was expressed, so that the sentence might coincide with what he believed to be the truth; and, when he failed, he would explain his own view with moderation and skill. In a treatise on morals he expressed in the form of a doubt an opinion differing from that of St. Alphonsus, adding, "I write timidly against so great a man." A proof of his humility was the absence of all extraordinary expressions or pompous phrases in his conversation and in his writings; on the contrary, he chose common and ordinary forms, into which, however, he infused, as naturally as he breathed, an atmosphere of loftiest purity and often of striking originality.

His actions were in harmony with his words. In his bearing he was modest and simple as a child. Tranquillity and peace were expressed in his countenance—an indication of his perfect humility of heart—so that we might apply to him the words of the poet—

> "Humility so truly dwelt in him
> He seemed to say: 'I am at peace.'"

Affable to all, there was no assumption of superiority in his intercourse with rough and ignorant persons; he spoke to them in the most genial manner, full of respect, quite forgetful, or rather completely unconscious, of his own greatness. Still greater was his respect towards persons of higher standing, and we have already seen how reverent his manner was towards priests in particular. I will mention only one fact, which was related to me by an eye-witness, one of the parties concerned. Canon Gianbattista Monti from the College at Borgamanero was going to Calvario with a companion to make a few days' retreat, and before entering the house they went into the church. A priest who was praying there perceived the two strangers and at once left the bench on which he was kneeling to make room for them, while he knelt down on the bare pavement. On arriving at the house they asked for Father

Rosmini, when to their astonishment they found that he was the humble priest who had just before given them his place in the church. It often happened that, from his humble and retiring manner, people who judge men by appearances were deceived, and, thinking they were addressing Father Rosmini, paid their respects with great ceremony to the priest who accompanied him. However, at times the contrary happened, and spiritual men gifted with greater discernment saw in this humble exterior itself the mark of true greatness. One instance was that of Dr. Bussolini, professor of dogmatic theology at the seminary of Novara ; he chanced to be travelling with the Father, who was quite unknown to him, but so much was he edified by the mere sight of his reserved and modest demeanour, that on his return home he stated his conviction that the priest he had met could be no other than the Abate Rosmini.

One characteristic of the humble man is that he distrusts himself and asks counsel of others for his own guidance. From childhood Father Rosmini was accustomed to ask advice about his studies, not only from his masters, Cesari, Beltrami, Lorenzi, Carlo Rosmini, and other learned men, but even from his fellow-students. The *Panegyric of Pius VII.*, composed after he had entered the priesthood, he submitted to the judgment of Parenti, and implicitly followed his friend's suggestions as to the language ; he gave Mellerio the MSS. of his political writings to examine ; he revised his work on Gioia according to Baraldi's observations, and in later years begged Bertolozzi to point out any Gallicisms in his writings. He also corrected an error in the treatise on *Conscience* pointed out by Angeleri ; and in his *Catechism* he faithfully followed the suggestions made by Cossa, a professor at the Roman seminary. He often took counsel with his subjects, not through affected modesty, nor to secure their assent or praise for preconceived opinions, but with a sincere desire of knowing their views as a further light upon his

own, that he might choose the best. Once there was question of receiving a certain person who wished to enter the Institute: Father Paoli inclined to favour him, but not so Father Rosmini. "Let us consult a third person," said he, with all simplicity, "and follow his advice." Father Rusca, a zealous priest without much culture, was called in and decided in favour of the postulant, who was received, but, as Father Rosmini had foreseen, did not persevere. He consulted even the lay-brothers sometimes and set great store by their advice. The vigil of the Annunciation, 1839, was a day of rigorous fasting for those who were about to make their first vows; their Father fasted with them, but towards evening he suffered from intense thirst, and humbly asked Brother Lugan's opinion as to whether he might drink a little weak coffee; this decision he accepted. Being about to provide some hydraulic contrivance to turn the course of a stream, he asked the opinion of a good lay-brother, who, with amusing simplicity and a little bit of playful malice, replied, "My parents always told me that water must be allowed to flow downwards." The Father said, with a smile, "Then we had better do so." Advice sometimes came unsought, but the humble Father did not reject it on that account. Now and then the advice sounded very like a reproof and anything but respectful, yet he never took it amiss or seemed hurt. Being admonished once by Father Molinari that he ought not to raise his voice in discussions, he said gently, "I have prayed earnestly that I might overcome this fault. What is to be done? God allows me to fall into it again: but I shall continue to pray on, hoping that I may at last obtain the grace." Father Signini one day took the liberty of pointedly asking him why he did not practise corporal austerities such as we read of in the lives of the Saints. Father Rosmini humbly cast down his eyes, as if under reproof, and only said that he did not feel called by God to do so. On this point I will recall another fact related by Father Signini, an eye-witness. When the

novitiate was being removed from Domodossola to Stresa, the travellers stopped in the course of their journey to get some refreshment. Whilst they were waiting Father Lowenbruck cast his eyes on the Father's biretta, and began to remark that the tassel was far too large and was not in conformity with religious moderation and simplicity; then without more ado he got up, pulled out a pair of scissors and ruthlessly clipped the poor tassel: the good Father said nothing, but smiled and let him have his way.

The office of Superior affords the humble man a wide field for the exercise of virtue; it is so easy for one in a high position to look down on those beneath him. Father Rosmini, who was appointed General of the Institute by the Holy Father himself, governed it through obedience, and never assumed an air of authority or allowed his commands to weigh on his subjects. Although it was a maxim of his that a Superior should not entreat when it was his duty to command, yet, as a rule, he would ask or express a wish rather than exercise authority. When giving correction he would speak as a friend, not as a judge; and, drawing the culprit's attention to the fault, make him pass judgment upon it himself. He also suggested that it would be well to say "we," not "you," in admonishing others, because this way of including oneself, as it were, in the blame makes the guilty party feel the disgrace less; it takes the sting out of the reprehension and makes it more effectual. "His corrections sounded like entreaties," to quote the touching expression of one of his spiritual daughters. If his office placed him over his subjects, he strove in humility to put himself on their level; he called them all brothers, and, far from being ashamed of the title, delighted to acknowledge them as such and treat them on all occasions with brotherly equality. Once when the King of Saxony came to visit him at Stresa, they met one of the lay-brothers in his working-dress as they were going round, and Father Rosmini immediately pointed him out to his royal visitor, saying, "This is one

of my brothers "—an honour of which the good lay-brother boasted all the rest of his life. On his way back from the Tyrol with Brother Lugan, they spent a night at Milan, and, whether it were that another bed was not to be had or that he wanted to give the brother a lesson in poverty, they shared one poor couch, though he knew Lugan talked in his sleep and would give him little chance of a night's rest. On another occasion after he had given the spiritual exercises to the clergy at Ivrea, he proposed to call on the Countess Masino, and told Brother Carli, his companion, to get ready to go with him. The good brother, unprepossessing in appearance and rather inclined to be slovenly in his dress, certainly had not the manners of a gentleman, nor any airs and graces; however, to comply with the obedience, he attired himself in his best, put a big scarf round his neck, got on a pair of gloves, and was presented by Father Rosmini as one of his brothers to the lady, who made him sit down to table with the other guests, admiring no doubt the humble obedience of the son no less than the humble charity of the Father.

A sign and an effect of true humility is the desire to avoid singularity, in which a vein of pride so often conceals itself. Father Rosmini did not wish to be singular in anything; he would have no church vestments set aside for his particular use, no clothing, furniture, or food different from the Community. Once he was provided with better ware at table, but he immediately sent it away to be used for visitors; another day Brother Carli laid a better tablecloth, saying it had already been used for guests, but the excuse was not admitted. When at table in the ordinary refectory, the Father would take the book from the reader and read part of the time. One day, perceiving that the door was not properly closed, he put down his serviette and went on tiptoe as quietly as possible to close it, lest it should cause inconvenience to any one. The Duke of Montmorency when visiting Stresa expressed a wish to see Father Rosmini; not that he had need of him or ex-

pected any moral benefit from the interview, but out of a mere desire to see a remarkable man, a kind of curiosity. The Father, though usually most obliging to all, refused on this occasion to go down the hill to Stresa, dreading to make himself singular by such useless display, and he turned it off with a jest.

Another sign of true humility is love of humiliations, which guard and nourish humility. The reader will not have forgotten the voluntary humiliations practised by our Father during his novitiate at Calvario and at Trent, when he was to be seen serving at table, cleansing the kitchen utensils, giving out the soup to the poor, washing the feet of a poor invalid priest, and performing similar lowly duties. From time to time he asked penance in public for his faults, an exercise of humility customary in religious houses. When it happened that through carelessness he was left without something, or that proper respect was not shown to him, he made no complaint and gave no sign that he had perceived it. Occasionally he was seen wearing garments so ill-fitting that they almost looked as if they had been given him in mockery, but he seemed not to be aware of it. On some rare occasions he sought out opportunities of humiliation, as in 1840, when he left Rovereto for Milan with Brother Lugan, who was wearing an old coat quite green and much too small, a pocket-handkerchief round his neck, and a broad-brimmed hat so worn out that people laughed as they went along, and remarked that Rosmini must surely be able to afford a few pence to get him a better hat; the Father evidently desired the humiliation for himself rather than for his companion. He seldom sought out humiliations, it is true, for fear of singularity; but, on the other hand, he gladly welcomed the occasions of humbling himself that came unexpectedly, and numerous and painful they indeed were.

To conclude, nothing was he more anxious to instil into the minds and hearts of his spiritual children than the love of humility and of the humiliations which serve to strengthen

it. He has set down in the *Constitutions* that the state chosen by his Society in the Church should be the hidden life; that for this reason every one should be on his guard against assuming too readily the position of a teacher; all should therefore remain in humility, subject to the teachers and pastors appointed by Jesus Christ; they should not aspire to honours and public positions, but continue hidden in Christ, occupied in judging and condemning themselves, thus to cleanse their souls from all stain. Far from seeking celebrity for his Institute, he loved to keep it hidden. "For charity's sake," he wrote, "let us be in no hurry to make our Institute renowned;" and again, "I am pleased to see the Institute still in its native obscurity and lowliness." In fact, he endeavoured whenever it was possible to keep it in a lowly state. When Mgr. Baines offered the rectorship of his college to Father Gentili, for instance, Father Rosmini at once wrote that he was to decline the position because it was too high a post. When Father Alvazzi was given the choice of the first or the third Latin class at the Mellerio College, he suggested that the lower class should be selected as the more humble office, quoting our Lord's words, "Suffer little children to come unto Me." The *Constitutions* prescribe that the instruction of the poor should be preferred to the education of the higher classes; for many reasons, doubtless, but certainly as an exercise of humility. He strongly recommended Superiors never to pass over self-love in their subjects, but to pursue it into all its windings and hiding-places without giving it any quarter; and in his letters he was never tired of repeating his *Delenda Carthago*, "Carthage must fall"—self-love being the Carthage he had in view. Needless to say, the instructions on humility given by one whose actions were a constant practice of this virtue, bore abundant and lasting fruit.

Simplicity and Prudence.—I think it well to speak of simplicity and prudence together, because our Divine

Master united these two virtues when He said: "Be ye prudent as serpents and simple as doves." It is well to combine them also, because each is a support to the other; for as simplicity without prudence easily degenerates into foolishness and weakness of mind, prudence, left to itself, becomes tainted with cunning and malice.

(i.) Simplicity is a virtue which constantly keeps in view the end of man's creation; it gives unity to the thoughts of the mind and the affections of the heart; and, since nothing is more *one* than truth, the virtue of simplicity leads man to the love of truth.

It would be difficult indeed to find a more ardent lover of truth than Father Rosmini, or one who pursued it more eagerly in the ordering of his thoughts, affections, and actions. This was the source of the admirable simplicity so evident in his appearance, in his speech, and in his movements, a simplicity which seemed at variance with his greatness, and yet in reality formed its perfection and its crown. Convinced that salvation is to be found only in truth, he applied himself to investigate it with great earnestness early in life, and inviting the co-operation of all lovers of truth, he endeavoured to construct what he termed the *System of Truth*. Throughout his life he laboured for the spread of truth, and strove to gain it an entrance into literature, into the sciences and arts, into politics, into public and private life, and he made it the rule of his daily conduct. From this love of truth arose the unmixed joy with which he received any glimmer of truth even from his opponents, and his studious care in searching out the particles of truth amidst their errors, endeavouring to separate them from the dross, and point them out to the credit of those who had, perhaps unconsciously, expressed them. The same love produced the horror he felt, not only for all falsehoods, lies, and fraud, but also for all those exaggerations and artifices which, while intended to embellish the truth, disguise its real aspect. One day when a eulogium on a person recently

deceased was being read to him, he was so disgusted by the absurd flattery it contained that he bade the reader cease. For the same reason he liked to see precision of language maintained in scientific treatises, with an absence of hyperbole ; and, in debates, he did not approve of subtle arguments, by which he feared the simplicity of the truth would be imperilled. Powerful as his intellect was in criticism and speculation, he would always check rashness in either ; and, though his reasoning powers were marvellously keen, he would never tolerate subtleties in a discussion. Father Signini one day proposed a difficulty savouring of sophistry, and he received the somewhat mortifying answer, "I like discussions, even deep ones, but your difficulty seems to me simply cavilling." He perceived that in this over-refinement the mind, by striving to penetrate further into the truth, runs the risk of passing it by and falling into sophisms, and truth suffers in the end. This was why he wished every one in his practical conduct to act on *primary reasons*, which are few, but are at the same time simple, sublime, universal, productive of constancy and peace ; whereas *secondary reasons* are innumerable, they are minute, partial, long-winded, disturbing both mind and heart.

He often recommended his religious with great earnestness to practise simplicity in their words and actions and even in their thoughts. He would have them avoid a haughty or overbearing tone when speaking and shun every kind of exaggeration ; when obliged to speak of themselves or their own affairs, they were to state with simplicity what they knew, and to say *rather too little than too much*, so as not to offend against truth. Even to those destined to preach the Word of God he strongly recommended simplicity, which he termed the most valuable quality of eloquence ; he warned them against certain theatrical practices in use amongst modern missionaries, and desired them to keep before them Jesus Christ, the model of missioners, whose preaching was always simple

and full of gravity and wisdom. In their actions all were to proceed by open and direct methods, not confiding in human prudence, which brings ruin and confusion; and, as he feared that contact with the world might lead any to adopt the maxims of "worldly policy," as he called it, which Our Lord condemns under the title of the "prudence of the world," he often repeated the words, "Beware of men." It was his wish that all should use the greatest simplicity in dealing with Superiors, to whom, he used to say, the mind of the religious should be as open as to the eyes of God. "The fullest loyalty and sincerity," he said, "are virtues which must be cultivated even to a scruple; there is no perfection without simplicity." In his Rules there is a chapter on Simplicity, in which he condemns all duplicity of heart and all pretence as a real pestilence to the religious, not only in his intercourse with his superiors, but also with his brethren, and even in regard to the thoughts of his own heart. "For," he says, "even a little duplicity, if not quickly discovered and rooted out by a diligent examination of conscience and the utmost watchfulness of the heart, may miserably overthrow the whole man." Hence he considered perfect openness with Superiors so important a point that he judged any one who could not adapt himself to it, unsuited to the Institute.

He always thought, acted, and spoke with simplicity. From the beginning of his religious life he opened his heart with simplicity to those who directed him in the way of perfection, and he longed to walk always in the light. Confiding in the truth, never did he betray it or even hide it through false respect, weak condescension or cowardly fear. He was quite aware that this was not the way to secure honour amongst men or to obtain favours from the great ones of the earth; he knew that it would draw down upon him coldness, ill-will, anger and persecution here below. But his views were above all this, and he was not deceived, for the sentence of Uncreated Truth must infallibly be fulfilled: "The simplicity of the just shall

guide them, and the deceitfulness of the wicked shall destroy them."[1] "The just that walketh in simplicity shall leave behind him blessed children."[2]

(ii.) Christian prudence is a virtue which looks to the means, chooses them, adapts them, and directs them to the end. It is less elevated than simplicity, for the means are only helps to attain the end; but these two virtues, far from being opposed to each other, unite in the most beautiful harmony. Worldly prudence is of a very different nature; it is an enemy to simplicity, for it serves self-interest and passion, not truth, and in Holy Scripture such prudence is said to be "dead" and to be "foolishness before God."

Father Rosmini had a horror of this kind of prudence, and, for fear of becoming tainted with it in the slightest degree, he held aloof from worldly transactions except under necessity. "I have a great dread of politics," he once said to Father Signini. By politics he meant the manœuvres, windings, cliques, and artifices of worldly prudence. At another time he remarked to Father Molinari: "The Providence of God shows me great favour by keeping me out of the business of the world." In 1848, when he received the most urgent invitations to go to Rome, he refused them as long as he could, and consented only when he had the clearest proofs that God required this painful sacrifice from him. He shrank from all intercourse with the great ones of the world, alarmed at the danger of transgressing the simplicity taught in the Gospel. "We must, as far as possible, fly from all connection with the great ones of the earth," he wrote to Father Lowenbruck in the early days of the Institute, "except when a moral obligation requires us to come into contact with them." In order to obtain from King Charles Albert the permission to circulate the Apostolic Letters granted by Pope Gregory XVI., he very reluctantly presented the *Constitutions* to the Senate; but, when he saw that the members of that body wanted to change the regulations concerning property and so alter

[1] Prov. xi. 3. [2] Ib. xx. 7.

the nature of the Institute, he withdrew them as soon as possible. Father Signini tells us of the good Father's joy as he returned home with the book under his arm, and how he invited his companions to join him in thanking Almighty God for having saved him from a great danger, and to be quite content with the protection of God and His Holy Church. Father Signini also assures us that during the whole time he spent with Father Rosmini as his secretary, he never knew him to be at a loss when dictating, except once, and that was in a petition to Pope Gregory asking him to take up the cause of the Institute. He commenced and recommenced, thought and thought again; words would not come, and he was at last obliged to desist. Undoubtedly he was so timid and embarrassed, because he feared that in such a petition there might be a touch of "human prudence" which would be detrimental to the work of God.

Hatred of all human artifices may be called the negative part of Father Rosmini's prudence; his positive exercise of the virtue will be best illustrated by recalling some maxims which he laid down for himself and for others, and a few facts which prove his faithful practice of the same.

The supreme maxim of prudence he adopted was this principle of passivity, which he chose for the rule of his own actions: "To attend before all things to the reformation and sanctification of oneself, and not to throw oneself into external work without an assurance of the Divine will." "One thing alone is necessary," he said, "to save our souls and to possess God within us; if God desires anything from us, He surely has power to speak to us, He Who has bestowed on us the power of speech!" This was the origin of his reserve—well-nigh reluctance—when there was question of external works, which some short-sighted people regarded as inertia, though in reality it was the concentration of his powers, a wise preparation, a humble and confident expectation of the hour fixed by God for the fulfilment of His designs. From the principle of passivity he derived another maxim: "Prudence consists

rather in refraining from action than in doing, in silence rather than in speech." The same principle produced many other maxims, such as "One should not be hasty." "Rapidity in action is more dangerous than delay, because the former is often accompanied by imprudence and undue haste, while the latter is often the effect of mature judgment." When Father Lowenbruck, anxious to rush about here and there to do good in his own fashion, seemed unable to content himself anywhere, his wise Superior reminded him that "the false prophets" were those "who ran." And when Father Paoli, all eagerness to read the Father's philosophical works as fast as they came out, asked his leave to do so, the reply he received was: "The time for study will come only too soon; this is the time for humbling yourself before God in prayer,"—words which are an echo of what he wrote to Tommaseo: "First the foundation, then the building: charity first, then science; for the latter *shall be destroyed*, but the former *never falleth away*."

A maxim of prudence strongly urged upon all by Father Rosmini in public and in private, and which he suggested in political matters, was: "The substance should be clearly distinguished from the accidents, and we must beware of allowing the former to escape our notice through excessive care about the latter." Of this prudence he gave many examples, often sacrificing details in certain good works which to him appeared desirable, even excellent, for fear of losing the good that was certainly attainable. To cite an instance. After a struggle with the authorities in Piedmont to secure for his teachers the little liberty allowed them by the law, he finally resolved in 1844 to send two of them to the University at Turin. Again, after many efforts to induce the Minister of Reform to enter on a broader policy, which should solve the question of liberty of teaching *all' italiana*—that is, with the civil and religious wisdom becoming to Italians—he saw that he was only losing time, and arranged to send Father Paoli to the University to qualify himself as a professor of

Method, and also to allow other members to attend the public classes that they might obtain teaching certificates. Still further, after he had tried in vain to induce the authorities to permit the use of his own method, he consented to subject his school to the ever-changing and often imprudent government regulations. These courageous acts of prudence gained him the esteem and confidence of the education authorities, and enabled him still to do some good. The same maxim of prudence led him to introduce a new form of poverty in his Institute, which, while leaving to the religious the radical dominion of property in order to secure it against usurpation, still maintained intact the essence of evangelical poverty—a bold innovation, at first ridiculed by some and bitterly opposed by others, but now acknowledged on all sides to be the only means of saving the property of religious societies. Another equally striking instance of his prudence was the rule that the responsibility for his actions should rest on each member, and not on the Society. Here is a regulation which respects personal dignity, is a stimulus to the exercise of one's powers for good, a restraint on evil tendencies, and at the same time an act of justice towards the Society; because it would not be just to allow a member to do wrong and be shielded by the Society from disgrace and chastisement, nor would it be just for the guilt or dishonour incurred by individuals to fall upon the Society as a whole.

To these maxims, which may be called general rules of prudence, I must add some which specially concern the government of subjects. The first principle he laid down was this: "Be very sparing of your commands; it is the best way to secure obedience." This was his own custom, as we have seen; he would ask, propose, advise before he commanded; thus, whilst saving the weak from the risk of open disobedience and rendering the sacrifice of the will more easy, he made obedience itself more pleasant and more meritorious. Another saying of his was, "Never

hurt other people's self-love without necessity," because self-love is extremely touchy, and, when once irritated, becomes stubborn; it will not give in and upsets everything. A similar saying is: "You must not take men against the grain," that is to say, not contradict them without grave cause; for, by condescending to their weakness in things not essentially wrong, we shall find them more docile and obliging in cases of necessity. He acted on this principle in the case of one of his priests, whom he allowed to issue a book of devotions for the Via Crucis, though it probably did not defray the cost of printing; but the act of condescension secured his good-will and made him more manageable in an affair of importance. He said that, on principle, he tried to please every one when it could be done without going against the will of God. The sentence, which may well be called a golden maxim, however, so valuable is it to the Superior of the smallest community no less than to the ruler of a kingdom, is this: "Measure the strength of your subjects, not only their physical and intellectual capabilities, but, still more carefully, their moral power, and proportion their burdens accordingly." Clearly this is a Gospel maxim, which our Lord expresses in the similitude of the old bottles that would be broken by pouring new wine into them, whilst the wine itself would be lost. Jesus Christ Himself practised this maxim when He told His Apostles that He reserved many things which He had to say to them, because they were not then able to bear them. Father Rosmini was a master in the use of this form of prudence. From those of his religious who were strong in virtue, such as Fathers Gentili, Molinari, Pagani, and Gilardi, he exacted difficult acts of obedience; he reproved them severely for their faults, subjected them to rigorous penances, and sometimes appeared almost harsh in his dealings with them; towards others whom he knew to be weak he was most indulgent, so as to appear excessively lenient. A certain priest of his Institute, deficient in spiritual strength,

was allowed to return home and even to remain there ten months, after which Father Rosmini would have been quite willing to re-admit him had he returned; he told him plainly, however, that this extraordinary concession was only made on account of his want of spiritual energy. Another priest, of excitable disposition, who was wavering in his vocation spent some months, by way of change, at the residence of a pious, noble family, the Father hoping that he would come back in better health and at peace.

These few examples of Father Rosmini's principles, so faithfully carried out by him in practice, will serve to show the exalted nature of his prudence; it was a heavenly prudence, which was capable of selecting the means according to the persons and occasions with all the pliability of the serpent, and could at the same time soar on high with the wings of the dove, pursuing its immaculate path unswervingly to the very end. In this way, too, Father Rosmini was a great philosopher, if the saying be true, *philosophiæ culmen simplicem esse cum prudentia* — the highest philosophy is to combine simplicity with prudence.

Fortitude, Patience, and Meekness.—Human nature, now weak and wavering, as a consequence of original sin, is unable to do without the exercise of a certain force or power which we call *virtue*. By fortitude, however, is not here meant the virtue which ordinarily accompanies every good action, but a special virtue which renders a man firm and intrepid in doing good amidst serious difficulties, arising at one time from the annoyances and trials produced by untoward events, and at another time from the malice of men. In the first case it is called fortitude, and in the second patience. Again, if it is employed in repressing anger, to prevent its violent emotions from hindering good works, we give it the name of meekness or mildness. Fortitude, patience and meekness are closely related to each other, but, as they are distinct, we shall speak of them separately.

(i.) Nothing is more powerful than truth, and it consequently confers on those who love it an invincible firmness of character which nothing else can bestow. Father Rosmini, through natural modesty and self-diffidence, was extremely averse to leaving his peaceful solitude, and, being of a mild disposition, shunned all contests: yet he would come forward fearlessly, full of animation and ready to do battle for the truth when he saw it in danger. On such occasions he feared no opponent and shrank from no peril. When a youth he put forward very unpleasant truths in his panegyric of Pius VII., bitter indeed to the princes of the world, who, puffed up by their power, tyrannised over the nations and the Church of God. Shortly afterwards he attacked the long-established fame of Foscolo, Gioia, and Romagnosi, defying the angry crowd of their followers, who almost worshipped them. Then with the courage which he looked upon as a sacred duty for one who aspires to be a philosopher, he confronted the mass of prejudice and the onslaught with which the passions of men would oppose him in his endeavour to establish his *System of Truth*. For this cause he laboured, endured, and fought as long as he lived, and when it seemed as if prejudice and passion would gain the upper hand, he tranquilly exclaimed with unshaken confidence in God: "Truth is true, and in the end it must gain the upper hand: 'The lip of truth shall be steadfast for ever: but he that is a hasty witness frameth a lying tongue.'"[1] This man, so remarkable for his meekness, warned his religious against false meekness, which turns aside from the conflict even when zeal for truth and justice renders it necessary. In days of political excitement and the whirl of passion he was undaunted amidst the general panic, and never refrained from speaking the truth through cowardice or fear, although he well knew what painful consequences would accrue to him. He addressed words of respectful and courageous advice to Charles Albert and to Pius IX.; he spoke more

[1] Prov. vii. 9.

freely still to the ministers of each sovereign, and he did not fear to reproach the Cabinet for allowing the Church in Piedmont to be persecuted. At a time of fearful uncertainty he suggested to the Pope a decided course of action, which, had it been adopted in time, would probably have saved Rome from revolution and the Pope from exile; when, however, he saw his proposals rejected by short-sighted politicians and envious courtiers, he withdrew and maintained a silence entirely free from cowardice and more powerful than any contradiction. He courageously defended the Sisters of Providence against the injustice of a certain rich gentleman full of pretensions, and protected them from the vexations of the Governor of the Canton Ticino; he displayed the like fortitude in supporting the rights of the Institute against the Minister of Reform and the King's Minister, who wished to change its nature. As we have said previously, he did not shrink from appealing to the law that justice might be done, lest his patience might serve to foster the boldness and malice of the wicked. When he saw the Piedmontese Government introduce iniquitous laws against religion, he employed his pen to unmask the deceits and sophistry by which they tried to give their evil designs an appearance of good. These articles appeared without his name, not through fear, but as a precaution suggested by his prudent charity, to prevent unnecessary persecution of himself or his Institute. "I am like the hen," he said, "that fears the bird of prey." A display of courage made without cause is not fortitude, but foolhardiness.

(ii.) To bear with constancy the evils that arise from adversity or that are inflicted by the malice of men is a species of fortitude not inferior to the virtue that carries out difficult undertakings; hence the saying of the Wise Man: "The patient man is better than the valiant."

The reader has already in the course of this biography had occasion to admire the patience of Father Rosmini under his sufferings and those of his religious, under the

loss of dear friends and the contradictions, misfortunes and afflictions of every kind by which he was tried. It was impossible that he should not feel the bitterness of such trials, for he was a mortal man like his fellows, and he sometimes said so without complaining. Thus, when one of his spiritual children complained of being tired out, the Father replied: "As for me, I have been weary for more than thirty years." Yet with all this he was not listless; indeed, the weight of tribulation only seemed to call forth new vigour in that valiant soul.

One constant exercise of patience from his earliest youth, though not very apparent, was the fact that he was not understood by those very persons who were nearest to him and who loved and revered him most. However much he might try to render his thought and language easy, so to speak, it often happened that men of culture were unable to follow him in his lofty flight. He was too closely allied to the past, whose traditions he wisely revered; and he saw too much of the future, into which his genius penetrated with brilliant foresight; by the present therefore he was not understood, or, worse still, he was misunderstood. Whatever might be the cause of this lofty solitude, he resigned himself to it with tranquil serenity, while many who complain of not being understood ought rather to think it fortunate that no one understands them. The frequent visits and correspondence by letters which interrupted his studies and other occupations were almost daily occasions of patience to Father Rosmini. We have more than once stated that he devoted himself to study as a sacred and imperative duty imposed on him by the Will of God, and it is well to repeat this. In one of the last years of his life he said to Father Aimo in familiar conversation, "I believe that my mission from God is to reform philosophy, politics, and asceticism." Now it seldom happened that he was a single day without troublesome visitors to break in upon his hours of study. One of the Elementary masters, a novice, or a poor lay-brother,

would come to him, each about some trifling matter. At once his dictation or study was suspended; he received them with cheerful mien, and sent them away satisfied. At other times strangers called on him through curiosity to see and hear him; these he received with the utmost courtesy and kindness, and without showing any annoyance listened to their remarks, which were frequently importunate or trifling, and made with an air of affectation or foolish display. His letters manifest in a striking way his patience in consoling the afflicted, strengthening the weak and reassuring those who were tempted against their vocation. This fact will be clear to any one who reads his letters to Fathers Lowenbruck, Rey, Mazzi, and Parma, and to a Swiss cleric, a weak-minded man, who, even after he had left the Institute, continued to be a source of annoyance to his benefactor. A certain individual, who had some whimsical ideas about philosophy, deluged him with letters, which for some time he regularly answered. Father Paoli at last thought it well to warn him that this poor fellow's brain was affected, but the Father replied: "I can see very well what sort of man I have to deal with; but what is to be done? My letters comfort him, and I should not like to afflict him by refusing to write."

A few other incidents which I wish to record here will serve to put Father Rosmini's patience in a clearer light. We have seen that when, through mistake or inattention, proper respect was not paid to him, he bore it quietly, without even appearing to notice it. Sometimes when he had been out, the porter was slow in coming to answer the door on his return, and there the good Father would quietly stand waiting until he came. Occasionally some member of the household would be late when they assembled in the evening to hear the points for the next day's meditation; but he invariably waited in silence until all had arrived before beginning. Bonghi confessed that through a kind of peevishness he used to take pleasure in contradicting Father Rosmini when the conversation was not on

purely philosophical or theological subjects; this rudeness the Father bore with extraordinary patience and humility. His patience was put to a much more severe proof in 1849 by the Capuchins of St. Ephrem's during his stay at Naples as their guest. They were afraid of the police, and became anxious that he should leave them; not liking to tell him plainly that he must go, they contrived to keep him waiting a long time in the sacristy before Mass, hoping to tire him out and force him to depart, but he took no notice whatever of their uncourteous treatment. Brother Lugan, a good Tyrolese, who enjoyed the affectionate, almost intimate, friendship of the Father, records from his own experience many instances of his patience. In 1838, when they were both returning to Piedmont from Rovereto, they were obliged to change coach at Verona, because the driver, who was either intoxicated or a swindler, gave them so much annoyance. In the hurry and consequent confusion, a bag containing their best garments and the manuscript of the *Catechism according to the order of ideas* was left behind, and was not missed until they had been an hour on their journey. Father Rosmini gave no sign of disturbance; he simply said that he was rather sorry about the Catechism, because it would not be easy for him to compose it again. In 1840, on a journey from Milan to Rovereto, he went to Monasteruolo to visit the Castelbarco family, and when he had gone six or seven miles on his journey after leaving them, he found that a portfolio, containing a note for 35,000 scudi for Rome and his passport, had been forgotten. Father Rosmini, without losing his self-possession or reproving Brother Lugan, remarked that he somewhat regretted the passport, because time was precious, as he was to begin a retreat to the clergy at Rovereto next day. Brother Lugan offered to go back and look for them, but the good Father stood for a moment in thought, raising his heart to God for guidance, as he was accustomed to do in such straits, and then said, "Let us go on; our Lord will provide." At Brescia and

other places they encountered great difficulty for want of the passport, and, not being permitted to enter the Tyrol by way of Verona, they were obliged to go round by Desenzano; but the exceeding patience of Father Rosmini permitted no trace of disquiet or disturbance to be seen. On his return from Rome in 1849, Brother Lugan went to him immediately to express his grief at the prohibition of his two works and the way in which it had been done. The Father smiled and answered, "Believe me, my dear James, I have not felt the slightest resentment about it."

The patience he exercised towards those who lived with him was also very great, and, as I recall the character, the infirmities and the peculiarities of those who were most frequently with him, I am tempted to conclude that he purposely chose them, either to relieve others of the annoyance or to procure for himself occasions of exercising patience. Antonio Carli, the brother who assisted him, was extremely nervous, and at times very gloomy; while his nervous attacks, when violent, so disturbed his reason, that he might injure any one who came near him. Father Signini, when a young cleric, was so tormented by scruples that the Master of Novices, despairing of his cure, put him into the Founder's hands. The latter employed him for nine months as his secretary, and the trouble he caused Father Rosmini during that time was enough to drive him mad; more than once he was obliged to get up after he had gone to bed at night, and go to soothe and console this poor son of his. He engaged two other clerics in writing for him; one of whom had his head full of odd fancies on mystical and non-mystical subjects; the other was strange and whimsical, and had his heart so set on becoming a priest that he left the Institute in the end. Father Toscani, for many years his secretary, who in that capacity went with him to Rome, Gaeta, and Naples, though an excellent priest, and, to a certain extent, a man of cultivated mind, had very narrow views and differed from Father Rosmini on political and philosophical questions.

Brother Antonio Carli asserts that he himself had to try and copy out as well as he could some political letters of the Father's, because Father Toscani refused his assistance; this is but one of many instances of his conduct, scarcely credible, which might be adduced on the testimony of persons well worthy of credit. Notwithstanding all this, Father Rosmini uttered no word of blame or any complaint against his secretary; on the contrary, in those dark days he wrote that Father Toscani was his greatest comfort. Such inconveniences he considered as occasions of mortifying himself, and in this mortification of himself he beheld the royal road to attain the true imitation of Christ and to rise to the sublimest virtue.

(iii.) Fortitude is exercised chiefly in restraining the violent emotions of the soul; hence, according to the saying of the Wise Man, "The patient man is better than the valiant: and than he that taketh cities."[1] Fortitude is therefore the mother of meekness, and Manzoni uttered a wise and witty saying when he applied to Father Rosmini Samson's riddle, "Out of the strong came forth sweetness." I wish to notice Father Rosmini's meekness in governing his subjects, especially in correcting them and in bearing offences and injuries calculated to provoke anger.

The government of souls is entirely a work of love, and the expression of love is gentleness. This quality he recommended to the members of his Institute, especially to Superiors; he often recalled the saying of St. Francis of Sales that one drop of honey caught more flies than a barrel of vinegar. "O God!" he wrote to a Superior, who owned that he was brusque and sharp with his subjects, "can you tell how much is destroyed by one act of ill-humour? You destroy what has been built up by the patience of years." This sweetness, he used to say, "ought not to be far-fetched; it should arise spontaneously from acting in the tranquillity of the interior light, where there is no trace of passion or anger." Correction was to be

[1] Prov. xvi. 32.

given, he said, "with a special serenity of look, and sometimes even with a smile"; and he wished to see a "loving smile" on the countenance of every Superior, and indeed of every religious of the Institute of Charity. He himself was such an one, with his smiling aspect and gentle words, which in correction itself had the sound of entreaty. "Even in reproof he gave consolation," said Father Setti. His gentleness, however, had nothing of softness in it, nor was his meekness weak and yielding, or ready to connive at what was wrong; many of the facts yet to be related will show plainly the strength of his meekness and the power of his gentleness.

He went out one day to take a turn in the garden near the College at Stresa, and there came upon one of the little boys who had got in through a hole to take some fine oranges which had excited his appetite. Caught in the act, the young delinquent owned his guilt, and the Father, after correcting him kindly, took him back to the rector of the College, and said, as he handed him over, "Mind, you must not punish him, because he has owned his fault."

One morning after he had said Mass at the novitiate house, he was going to his cell in profound recollection, when a young novice, skipping down the stairs, suddenly came upon him at a turning with such force as almost to knock him down. The good Father only put out his hands as if to parry the shock, and, quite undisturbed, said, "A little more slowly."

On returning from a walk one day with Fathers Molinari and De Vit and the Marchese di Cavour, Father Rosmini was accosted by a man who begged an alms, saying that he came from Trent; he gave him three or four lire; but, as the fellow expected much more, he began to abuse the good Father, accused him of being heartless, and told him that this was not the way to treat a Tyrolese, &c. The meek and humble Father stood in silence to receive the rebuff, and when the man stopped, he quietly said, "Well, is that all you have to say?"

Once when travelling in a public coach, he fell in with a priest who did nothing but rail against Rosmini and his philosophy during the whole journey: the Father sat quite silent in a corner of the carriage, drinking in this panegyric. On arriving at his destination he went up to the speaker, bowed, and said briefly: "The Abate Rosmini presents his compliments, and advises you to be a little more cautious in what you say." How the priest felt we are not told. In this fact, as well as in others to be narrated, we see his meekness accompanied with that true zeal

"Which burns in the heart with measure."

In 1846 Count Mellerio went to Domodossola for the last time to visit the College he had founded, and Father Rosmini, who had accompanied him on the journey, wishing to do honour to his friend, requested that the pupils of each form should give proofs of their proficiency in their particular studies. The class of philosophy, however, either through timidity or want of preparation, or some other cause, failed, and failed utterly. The professor and the scholars seemed equally at a loss. It must have been a purgatory to Father Rosmini, who was present with Count Mellerio, but there he stood listening to the end without any sign of weariness or annoyance; and the professor, who expected a good scolding, could not help admiring the indulgent kindness of the Father, who neither then nor at any other time made a complaint about it or reproved him.

When Manzoni's two political songs were brought out, in 1848, Father Rosmini, greatly pleased, told his religious, and promised to read them aloud at the recreation after dinner. One of the brethren, who was morbidly sensitive, objected to being present, alleging that he could not keep his attention on anything read aloud, but his real reason was that the Father's tone and style of reading did not please him. Those who were present could scarcely contain themselves at this rude, disrespectful behaviour; but Father

Rosmini with unruffled calmness replied: "Very well, while I am reading to the others you may go away; I will give you the verses afterwards to read to yourself." He did so, but, as he gave them, wishing to correct such unreasonable dislike, he very gravely uttered this sentence, "*Judicium aurium superbum*"—The judgment of the hearing is pride.

One of the clerics, a weak-minded man and full of conceit, gave Father Rosmini no little trouble, and left the Institute in the end, after which he was in a lunatic asylum for some time. The Father bore with him and treated him with the greatest possible gentleness, speaking very plain truths when necessary, but always in such a way as not to wound his self-love. On one occasion, however, when the cleric in reply boasted, by way of excuse for his impertinence, that he was always candid, "Remember," answered the Father, "that there is a candour which is humility, and there is also a candour which is pride."

Those who were tempted against their vocation, either during their novitiate or afterwards, met with overflowing kindness; it was his desire that in deciding whether they were unfit for religious life and should be sent home, time should be taken to consider the case fully, and that every means should be used to help and strengthen them; indeed, he said that there were cases in which the Superior should on his knees beg those who are tempted to quit religious life, not to yield to the temptation. Still there was a case in which he directed Father Paoli to call up one of the clerics in the night, first taking away his ecclesiastical dress, and send him off in secular dress that very night for his misdemeanours; as St. Ignatius did in a similar case with a religious who was headstrong, though he was a learned man and skilful in business matters. It is well to note the acts of the Saints, because they prove that severity and gentleness are not incompatible, and that on some occasions severity may be as real a kindness as leniency.

The spirit of meekness permitted that, on some rare

occasions, he should rise up and defend himself against the abuse and calumny with which he was assailed; this was when the cause of truth, religion, and justice was involved, and seemed to be one with his own. He defended his good name against the false imputations made by *Eusebio Cristiano*, and cleared himself of the unjust accusation of error before Pius IX., remembering the sentence, "Have a care of thy good name"; he also left to posterity his *Commentary on the Mission to Rome*, which proved his devotion to the Sovereign Pontiff and the uprightness of his conduct. But when the injuries were inflicted only on himself personally, he endured them with silent dignity, leaving it to God to defend his innocence; for it was not as a mere show that he inscribed over his cell at Stresa the words, "In silence and in hope shall your strength be." His silence was not timidity; it was the silence of fortitude, charity, and prudence—for it is fortitude to feel one's own power and yet control it; it is charity to hide the rays of truth from eyes that are too weak to receive them; it is prudence to prepare one's words in silence that they may come forth later with greater brilliancy and animation, like light issuing from shadow.

Some were of opinion that in certain writings, especially in his early days, against Gioia, Romagnosi, and Mamiani, and, later on, against *Eusebio Cristiano*, he displayed some sharpness and did not preserve a peaceful calm. This ingenious and piquant style, however, was not the outcome of passion; it was due to a deliberate resolve. When refuting the three first, he intended to render the treatise more attractive by the animated style, while in confuting *Eusebio* he considered it a duty to speak out strongly against error hidden under the appearance of truth. Moreover, as Tommaseo remarks, Father Rosmini warmed to his subject as he went on, and, in order to render the controversy more interesting and the reading less heavy, he interspersed remarks that were witty; though not personal, they touched on certain things which may perhaps have

made them strike home the more effectually. His indignation was free from anger; it was aroused against error, never against the erring person. No one could come into contact with him, even in a slight degree, without readily perceiving that he was even greater as a man than as a writer; Mamiani and Gioberti amongst others recognised this on making his acquaintance, and publicly expressed their regret for not having treated him with becoming reverence. If any one insists on a want of meekness in these writings, I will, instead of arguing about the question, point out that Father Rosmini possessed a natural vein of humour, which his intercourse with his fellow-students in early years tended to develop, and he once said to Father Signini: "I am by nature strongly inclined to be satirical, and am obliged to be very much on my guard to restrain myself; if I were to follow this tendency it would at times be terrible." Hence, if in the ardour of youth he did sometimes go beyond the mark, yet in maturer years he succeeded in subduing himself so as to be gentle and kind to all. This is, in fact, a subject of highest praise, for it proves that his meekness was not simply a gift of nature, but in great measure a victory gained by his free-will.

Temperance, Chastity, Poverty.—Temperance is a virtue which restrains nature's disorderly craving to gratify the senses by gluttony and other unlawful pleasures; it is called temperance inasmuch as it opposes gluttony, and chastity as opposed to sensuality. Poverty is a valuable aid to both virtues, for it deprives the opposite vices of their chief incentive, viz., the riches of this world. We may then fitly treat of poverty in the same chapter with temperance and chastity.

(i.) Antonio Rosmini gave proofs of his temperance in the use of food from his infancy, when he loved to deprive himself of his cakes to feed the poor and give them pleasure; his pious mother's care trained him in the practice of this virtue by leading him to avoid dainty and tempting dishes,

and content himself with plain, common fare. The power of his will over the inferior appetites grew with his years, and made his love for abstinence more and more evident. His food, usually coarse and ordinary, was taken, not as a gratification, but as a necessity. Even when he was weak and required nourishing food suitable to his state of health, he would make no change. At Milan, when weak and ailing and spitting blood, he was content at mid-day with a few grapes and some dry bread, and his dinner in the evening was often cold and badly cooked, so that Tommaseo felt bound to remonstrate with him for living in such a way. At Calvario and Trent, as we have stated, he managed to live with the others on polenta, vegetables—chiefly potatoes—and chicory, so that people nicknamed the Fathers *cicoriani*. Father Pagani found the food so poor and scanty when he came as a novice to Calvario that, fearing his health would fail, he lost heart, and was on the point of leaving. But when he observed Father Rosmini, and reflected that he was a nobleman who had been brought up in the midst of comforts, he felt ashamed of his own effeminacy, took courage, and remained constant in his vocation. Father Rosmini was sparing in his food, but we may say that he abstained from wine, he drank so little. He always entertained his guests most hospitably, and when at table with them would take somewhat better food ; but, when he was alone with his religious, he never allowed himself anything different from the ordinary fare. A special dish prepared for him one day was immediately sent away. He was dining on an abstinence day with the Elementary masters at Stresa, and amongst other things the cook prepared some chocolate cream with great care. After dinner, however, the Father sent for him, and said in gentle reproof, " What have you done ? You must remember that we are poor people, and such tempting dishes are not for us." Even in his last illness he showed reluctance to take better food, and Brother Carli, with an infirmarian's authority, had to persuade him to consent.

Although he prescribed no special abstinences in his rule, he set great value on them, and used to say they were a remedy against spiritual relaxation; and whilst he always desired his subjects to have the requisite nourishment to enable them to labour, he reproved them for anything like self-indulgence. Hearing that Father Molinari, then a young priest, had asked for a little chocolate on Sunday mornings when his work in the confessional was heavier, he wrote to the Superior that the request savoured of greediness, and that he must impose some penance on his unmortified subject, such as having dry bread for breakfast for some days. "Poor persons as we are," he said, "ought to be quite pleased and satisfied to have dry bread in the morning." Besides observing the abstinences prescribed by the Church, he fasted every Saturday in honour of our Lady; and when about to receive the vows of the members he fasted rigorously the previous day on bread and water. Moreover, he gladly seized the occasions of mortifying himself which came unsought; he was delighted to be the last to help himself from the ordinary dish, so that he might have only what was left and what was worst; and when it happened that the food was bad or ill-cooked, he never once complained of it, or even gave any sign that he had perceived it. The reader will remember how for some months at Calvario he was treated to soup without salt. By an oversight the salad was once brought to table without seasoning; another time wine mixed with oil was given to him—and he took both without showing that he was aware of the mistake. On a fasting day the cook, a good lay-brother, who was rather odd, asked what he should prepare for dinner; he was told to cook polenta and fish; upon which he threw the meal and the fish into the same pot, and stirred and stirred them until he had made a medley which you would prefer to eat with your eyes shut, but the good Father took some and never breathed a word about it.

He took so little notice of the taste of food that it was

quite evident his thoughts were elsewhere. When a book was being read at table—as there is always at community meals—he listened with attention to the reading; and, as he was rather quick in taking his refection, he would frequently continue the lecture himself after he had finished. When there was no reading, he occupied his mind with other thoughts and appeared quite abstracted. On occasion of his first journey to Rome with Mgr. Pyrrker, he was invited to dine with the prelate on an abstinence day. According to the custom in such houses, meat and meagre food were both served at table, each one taking what was according to his conscience. The young priest took indiscriminately whatever they offered him, at which some of the company were much astonished, as he was apparently in good health. On leaving the table one of them asked him if he was ill, as they had seen him take meat and fish, though the Church did not allow it. Father Rosmini, very much confused, answered frankly, "If I must acknowledge the truth, I was not thinking in the least of what was on the table, and I do not even know what I have eaten." This inattention of mind in regard to his food is seen in a still more curious example related by Father Signini. They were seated together taking their small collation one day in Lent, and Father Rosmini, breaking up his bit of bread, soon finished. After a minute's silence he looked round the table inquiringly and said, "Eh! where is my bread?" Father Signini, who had seen him eat it bit by bit, said, with a smile, "Father, the bread has all been swallowed down before now." "Then the collation is finished," said he: "so much the better; let us go."

Worldly people do not esteem temperance as they ought; it would not surprise me, therefore, to find that the minute particulars recorded in these pages would seem to them not worth mentioning. Yet I am of opinion that our Father owed much of his intellectual and moral grandeur to the exercise of this virtue. A man who panders to his inferior appetites never rises above the earth; he either

crawls along or, powerless as a child, fails to press onward in the spiritual life; it is by severe abstinence that the soul gathers strength and, freed from slavery to material things, receives mighty wings to bear it aloft to the heights of speculation and of love.

(ii.) Chastity is abstinence from carnal pleasures; and, as the word implies, it is the chastisement of the rebellious senses which brings them under the dominion of reason and restores them to the primitive harmony broken by original sin.

Father Rosmini held the virtue of chastity in the highest esteem; he was rigid with himself in guarding it, and he was anxious that his spiritual children should be equally strict. "As to holy purity," he said, "we should all desire to possess it, by the mercy of God, to an angelic degree." He may, indeed, be said to have attained angelic purity, to judge by what we can gather on this point. In the appearance, the looks, the words of holy men there is something that makes us feel their interior purity; there is the brilliancy of a superhuman light, the odour of a heavenly fragrance, something indescribable that reveals the presence of God in their souls. Such did Father Rosmini appear to those who were most intimate with him. Virginal innocence shone in his countenance, to which an involuntary blush, so often the indication of a chaste soul, would quickly arise; he was reserved and almost bashful in manner; his glance was always modest and recollected. Mgr. Puecher Passavalli bore witness to the edification he had received when he first met the Father in the streets of Trent, walking with his eyes cast down, almost closed; and Mgr. Tizzani, who dined with him in Rome at the house of Count Castelbarco, assures us that he never saw him raise his eyes once during the whole course of the meal. In his conversation he was most particular; though naturally pleasant and fond of a joke, no word in the slightest degree wanting in modesty ever escaped him under any circumstances. "Even when

he was still inexperienced," writes Tommaseo, " unbecoming jests were never heard from his mouth ; he reproved them in others by his silence, fearing lest he should fail in discretion or modesty by alluding to them." Much as he loved the beauty of the Italian language, he detested works that were dangerous in tone ; he used to say that " an atom of morality is worth more than a mountain of Tuscan elegance." Whoever reads his moral works, in which it is sometimes necessary to touch on difficult matters, will certainly admire the delicacy and refinement, or rather the instinctive modesty with which he veils in prudent and becoming language whatever might offend the sensitiveness of a chaste soul. But Rosmini's love for the angelic virtue shone most conspicuously in the precautions he took to avert from himself and his religious every shadow of danger. Knowing that chastity, like a delicate flower, is spoiled by rough handling—nay, even by a touch—he considered no care too great to preserve it intact : hence his determined avoidance of great assemblies, his love of solitude, his long prayers, and his continual care to keep strict watch over his senses. I have drawn attention to the way in which he guarded his eyes and his tongue, and moreover to his temperance in regard to the use of food ; here I will set down some resolutions made by him at Rho during the spiritual exercises in 1836. " To protect and guard the extremely delicate virtue of chastity, I will, besides taking ordinary means, carefully avoid seeing anything that may be in the remotest degree dangerous ; I will, by the Divine assistance, keep my mind always intent on spiritual things, make use of frequent ejaculations, and avoid touching any one as far as possible, even in the most harmless or accidental way—such as caressing children or allowing women to kiss my hand." His reserve on this point was so extreme, that even in his last illness his infirmarian thought he carried it to excess.

With regard to his religious, he wrote in the Rule that " each one should strive to emulate and imitate the purity

of angels"; and as he knew the frailty of human nature, the utmost care in its defence did not seem to him too great. In the *Constitutions* he ordains that extreme caution should be used in accepting works of temporal charity in which any danger to this virtue might be feared; he preferred to leave such duties in the hands of well-known and exemplary ascribed members. When the Ossola was threatened with an outbreak of cholera, he offered his religious to perform any service for the sick, always excepting the temporal assistance of women. In the first establishment of the Sisters of Providence, considerable difficulty was caused by a wealthy gentleman who wanted to employ them in schools of boys and girls, and rather than allow this, Father Rosmini at last withdrew the sisters. Later on, hearing that some of his religious in England were about to take charge of a mixed school, he was extremely displeased, and wrote to the Superior in very decisive terms: "I absolutely cannot allow any of ours, whether priest or brother, to be sent to teach the school. So precious and delicate a virtue is purity that it must be preserved at all costs, even at the cost of breaking with the Bishops or of placing the existence of the Institute itself in peril; therefore the danger, and the very appearance of danger, must be shunned. Now, the teaching of mixed schools is a great danger and an impropriety. This must be a general rule: *I will never allow such a thing*. Let there be an end to this unseemly arrangement as quickly as possible." On hearing that it was customary in England for women to go to confession in other places besides the church, he strictly forbade his priests, in virtue of holy obedience, to hear them elsewhere. He disliked little presents being distributed at missions, not only on account of the jealousy so easily aroused, but also because they might be ascribed to wrong motives. In their visits to the sick and any intercourse with women, he wished the priests to have a companion if possible as a witness and guardian of their virtue. Being told that a woman in a

fainting condition had been taken into the house at Stresa, and some remedies given her, he wrote to Father Gilardi at once in much anxiety, stating his apprehensions. "These accidents make me fear," he said. "I beg you to be extremely wary, and to take alarm easily; the prudence of a Superior in such cases cannot be too great." In the boys' colleges directed by the Fathers he would not allow a shadow of anything improper; a delinquent was to be dismissed at once, for fear of contaminating others. "For charity's sake," he wrote to the Rector of the Mellerio College, "be rigorous on this point; at the first sign of infection let the unhealthy member be separated from the body: in this matter I know no mercy"; and again: "We must guard the College from infection; this is a serious duty. Your rule must be to take the safest course, nothing else can save educational establishments from contagion." Such horror of the evil is surely another proof of his intense love for the contrary virtue.

It was a saying of Father Rosmini's that an elevated, noble, and spiritual train of thought is a great help to chastity: "Contemplation makes concupiscence wither away," said one of the early Fathers. This is true, and it is no less true that by chastity the soul is fitted for lofty, noble, and spiritual thoughts. It is my firm conviction that the wonderful activity of mind, with which Father Rosmini was able to soar up to the contemplation of God and of Divine things, was due to the virginal purity of his soul; for it is written that "the clean of heart shall see God." They catch a glimpse of Him here amidst the shadows of creation; they see Him less obscurely in the aurora of His grace; and they will one day see Him radiant with the splendour of His glory.

(iii.) By poverty the mind renounces earthly riches to consecrate them to God's service in the exercise of charity. This was Father Rosmini's idea of poverty; so that with respect to material things two opposite feelings held sway in his soul—a great contempt for them on the one hand,

and a great reverence in disposing of them on the other. These two sentiments, apparently so contrary to each other, are found on further consideration to be perfectly in harmony. Material and corruptible things looked at in themselves are unworthy of the love of an immortal soul; but if we look upon them as consecrated to God by the free-will of man, and thus changed into instruments of good, they become valuable and worthy of reverence because of the noble end for which they are employed.

Contempt for earthly riches nourished in Father Rosmini's heart the love of actual poverty, the desire and endeavour to practise it, and joy at feeling its effects. From the day on which he dedicated to God in holy religion all he possessed, his heart was detached from everything, he considered himself one of Christ's poor, and wished to live as such. Though rich and noble by birth, and Superior-General of his Institute, he occupied one poor cell, where he studied, prayed, and took his repose. His bedstead consisted at first of two bare planks, with a sack of beech leaves; later on, it was replaced by a plain iron bedstead. The rest of his furniture was equally poor—a writing-table, a priedieu, and two or three common wooden chairs without polish or ornamentation, a holy-water stoup, a small crucifix, and a paper print of our Lady of Dolours—this was all his furniture. His clothes were of coarse cloth, and he continued to wear them even when they were old and patched; but they were never dirty nor untidy, for even in poverty he liked to see cleanliness and a certain propriety, so that others might not be annoyed or disgusted. He had neither a cupboard nor a box in which to keep his own clothes; but every Saturday he received as an alms from the wardrobe-keeper the necessary clothing for the next week. Father Paoli asserts that Brother Carli had the greatest difficulty in inducing him to exchange his worn-out garments for new ones; and he adds this fact, which appears almost incredible, that when Father Rosmini died in 1855 they were able to give Vela,

the sculptor, who wished to represent him in the costume of the Fathers, the very cloak which, twenty-five years previously, he had worn at Rovereto and Trent, and had continued to wear until his death. Visitors to Stresa will see amongst the relics of the great man, preserved with filial affection by his children, the cardinal's robes, which by a fortunate mischance he never put on, side by side with the patched garments he wore for so many years. Sparing and poor was his food, as we have seen, but I must here add that for upwards of a year, when he lived with the Elementary masters at Stresa, he gave the rector eighty centesimi (8d.) a day for his maintenance, and would on no account allow more than that to be spent on him. He envied the poverty of the Capuchins, and would have liked to go out, as they do, begging his bread with a bag hung round his neck; therefore whenever he had occasion to feel the discomforts of poverty, he rejoiced with holy gladness of heart. When the little house of St. Pietro Incarnario was opened at Verona, there were no beds, chairs, or conveniences of any kind, and for several days they slept upon mattresses laid on the floor; but amid this great want of all things, Brother Lugan tells us the Father was quite overflowing with joy. During his sojourn with the Capuchins of St. Ephrem's at Naples, he was more content with his little cell than he would have been with a royal palace. Vito Fornari, who visited him there, afterwards wrote: "I was edified at seeing him in such a tiny cell; one day when I accompanied two gentlemen who wanted to see him again we could not all sit down, as there was not a fourth chair in the room." Signor Gigante, a lawyer, offered to provide him with better bedding, but he refused, saying: "Thank you, my dear friend; I can do very well with what I have. I am not one of those who cannot say their prayers unless they are kneeling upon a down cushion"—as if to say: "I have been accustomed to rough it, and luxuries do not suit me."

A man of this kind might well speak powerfully on

poverty to the members of his Order; he termed it the "firm rampart of the Society and bulwark of religion," "a precious aroma which saves it from corruption," "a treasure to be carefully protected." He certainly did not mean that necessaries should be wanting; on the contrary, his poverty being considered by him as a form of charity, he wished all to have the conveniences that would best help them to fulfil their works of charity, but any conveniences that are hindrances or mere luxuries tending to foster idleness, are to be done away with as contrary to the spirit and the Rules of the Institute. For this reason it is stated in the Rules that the Institute must not possess precious objects of solid gold or silver except for the service of the Church, or for the use of guests or for scientific purposes. In accordance with this prohibition, only bone or wooden spoons, &c., were used at first, and, later on, pewter was permitted; but silver watches had the case changed for wood or brass. Hence the Presbyters are obliged to promise expressly that they will never allow any relaxation with regard to the regulations concerning poverty set down in the Rules and *Constitutions*. Hence, too, the rigour with which he put down all acts of independent ownership. "I will never allow any of ours," he wrote to one of them, "to dispose of even a straw at his own pleasure; and I shall always require them to despoil themselves of everything absolutely, because our Divine Model has done so: *nudus nudum sequere*. For this end the *Constitutions* expressly recommend the Father-General to open at a fitting time and place a house in which the brethren should live entirely on alms begged for the love of Christ, that poverty may always be practically studied, and that the spirit and fervour of the Institute may not decay.

Another way in which Father Rosmini showed his detachment from earthly riches was the peace with which he suffered losses and the utter absence of anxiety about lack of money. We have seen his remarkable tranquillity

when the portfolio containing a valuable cheque was lost. Oppressed by the exactions of the Royal Treasurer, who wanted to burden him with expenses at San Michele, he wrote to Father Puecher: "On no account must we cause a rupture or even give offence; we ought not to be too prudent with respect to earthly goods"; and again: "Has the Lord been pleased to make us bear the expense? Let us bless Him for it. I decidedly refuse to strive for temporal things, but I will defray the cost, even if the sum is beyond your means." On more than one occasion he submitted to a loss rather than go to law, following the Gospel maxim: "If any one take thy coat, give him also thy cloak." "It is better to pay than to be in debt," he wrote to Father Gilardi: "I have no great love for a full purse; I like to see it getting low instead." On sending his Fathers into England, he wrote to Mr. Phillips (De Lisle) that he need not trouble about their support: "Very little will be enough for us; and, if there is nothing whatever, we can live on the little we have as long as it lasts, and then trust to Providence; no one who worked for God has ever died of sheer want." Out of love for poverty he would not allow the Institute to shut its doors against any one. In a letter to Father Puecher he writes: "I do not wish any one to be sent away through self-interest, or even the appearance of it; I should have courage enough to receive a whole army destitute of means, if God were to send them to us. It would be utter madness for us to be terrified at poverty, which is the mother of religious Orders." Again he says: "The words of Christ, 'Be not solicitous,' must be faithfully practised; the thorn of anxiety, disquiet, and disturbance is then removed from the heart. Has the Institute ever been without necessaries? It never has been in the past; and it will never be in want in the future if we trust in God and serve Him." Father Signini, foreseeing that a religious holding the legal dominion of considerable property might possibly apostatise, once put this question pointedly to the Father:

"Father, what if a traitor were to make off with two or three millions?" He instantly replied: "The Institute would have gained immensely by getting rid of a Judas at the cost of a few millions."

Father Rosmini's contempt for earthly possessions in themselves was only equalled by his reverence in dealing with them when he considered them as consecrated to God. "In the Society," the Rule says, "everything is sacred, because all is consecrated to God and to our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Let all therefore strive with great diligence and zeal that everything be preserved for the honour of our Creator and Lord, and be used and administered with all watchfulness and care." On this subject he issued several decrees which provide that all sources of income acquired by the Institute should immediately and without delay be devoted to some work of charity, and that the persons appointed to administer it should fulfil their office with *exactness*, *fidelity*, and *clearness*, so that their accounts might be as *clear as daylight*, and be fit, as Samuel was, to meet the judgment of the people, nay, even the judgment of the whole world. Such importance did he attach to these matters that he told Father Signini he had worked a whole month with Father Gilardi, in preparing the system of accounts to be employed by the administrators of the Institute. He also remarked to Father Signini that a priest is not really formed unless he is well versed and experienced in the management of temporal business. This business capacity was possessed by him in a very uncommon degree; no one can read the Decrees we have mentioned without admiring the wonderful power of that mind which, engaged in lofty speculations on the Divinity and the laws of Divine action, could descend so readily to the smallest details of the world below, and arrange temporal affairs with regulations remarkable for wisdom and exquisite spirituality, and we might even say, of unction. He desired the rectors of religious houses to be watchful that nothing whatever should be wasted; rags, bones, cinders, broken

glass, and waste paper were to be sold, so as to derive some profit from them, mindful of the words of Christ : " Gather up the fragments, lest they be lost." On his way up to the novitiate from Stresa he one day met Father Paoli, and gave him three pieces of coal he had in his hand, saying : " I found these on the road, and picked them up ; take them and put them away ; nothing that we can use must be wasted." This instruction on poverty was of more value than the small quantity of coal. To young Bonghi, who was not under any vow of poverty, he gave a fatherly lecture for wasting money, as he sometimes did without reflection : " There is only one lawful way of being prodigal with it, and that is in giving alms," Rosmini told him, " otherwise it is wrong, and you will have to render an account of every penny that has not been well spent and for some good purpose." Bonghi, far from being offended, was much pleased, and replied that it was his right to speak in that way, since he only recommended what he had done himself and was still doing daily. No unnecessary expense would he ever allow for himself or his subjects—everything superfluous had to be removed. " If you had reason to believe that there was a superfluous thread, it should be taken away," he wrote to Father Pagani. He forbade the use of a counterpane that was bordered with a fringe ; he would not have fine table linen even when an excuse was made that it had already been used for guests ; in the purchase of the necessaries for the Cardinalate itself he wished the utmost economy to be practised, and the carriages he purchased were very plain ones, the property of a deceased Cardinal. On no account would he allow any distinctions to be made for him, not only out of a spirit of humility and mortification, as mentioned above, but also through love of poverty. He made his journeys in the public coach, and always travelled in the same class as the lay-brother who accompanied him. " When you are writing to me," he remarked in a letter to Father Puecher, " there is no need to use paper with a printed heading,

because we ought to be economical, as becomes poor people!" He drew up some minor rules for domestic order, insisting on the proper arrangement of furniture, care in handling things, and cleanliness in order to preserve them—points which, when attended to, make them last longer. He observed these rules himself to a scruple. "Do you see this pen?" he said one day to his secretary, Father Signini, pointing to the quill pen he used; "just see how long it is since we began to use it." It was eighteen months, and the pen was only half used, for Father Rosmini had repaired it carefully every morning with a penknife, to prepare it for his secretary. This kind of poverty will appear to some miserly and mean, if they look merely at the exterior without going to the solid reasons on which it was based. It may be well, then, to repeat that the riches of this world, consecrated to Christ for the purpose of charity, had become in Father Rosmini's eyes the patrimony of the poor, to be religiously preserved. According to his Rules, any earthly goods that come to the Institute from externs, or anything that is saved, may not be applied by the Father-General to his own use or that of his subjects —except what is necessary for their support. All must be devoted to specified works of charity, so that in course of time the Institute may be in a position to carry on such works without earthly recompense, according to the precept, "Freely have you received, freely give." Men of the world struggle with each other to accumulate—the Institute thinks only of giving; its device is "He hath distributed, he hath given to the poor."[1] Thus understood, it is clear that saving is reasonable, economy is wise, poverty is elevated and altogether spiritual, because it is animated by charity.

[1] Ps. cxi. 9.

CHAPTER XXX

ANTONIO ROSMINI'S DAILY LIFE AT HOME AND ON HIS JOURNEYS

"THERE are in this world people who say they do not know how to pass their time; yet the world has endless needs, and I never find my time sufficient;" this was Father Rosmini's remark to a friend. He also said: "I have never been able to comprehend how people can complain of not knowing how to occupy their time. Has not our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to love our brethren, and in this way prepared for us all a vast field of labour in which we ought to employ and even exhaust both strength and time?" Looking on time in this light, as a talent given him by God to trade with in doing good, he made great account of it, and from his earliest years he resolved not to squander one moment, which resolution he observed with unremitting fidelity. Whilst still young he rejoiced at the thought of being able to make good use of time, which so many neglect and lose irreparably, and thinking of the shortness of human life, he clipped the wings of his immense desire of knowledge to confine it within certain limits, saying with the Latin philosopher, "It is foolish to learn superfluous things in such a dearth of time." A rapid sketch of his ordinary life was given in a former chapter, but some further details may here be added, and certain particulars with respect to his journeys.

Rising promptly in the morning at the first call, he immediately raised his heart to God in prayer, and while performing the first actions of the day, continued to recite certain ejaculations, such as: "The night is passed, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of

light"[1]; "And put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth."[2] Thus, giving a mystical meaning to the commonest actions of life, he sanctified them by Christian thought and affection. Meditation, Holy Mass, and other spiritual duties, performed with the most profound recollection, were followed by a light repast and some hours of earnest study. He wrote standing, and when dictating, walked up and down the room. "I never remember to have seen him lose the smallest portion of the time assigned to dictating," said Father Signini. None of his religious could tell how or where he prepared the matter for his writings, and to them it certainly appeared marvellous. Clearly his mind was at work when he was attending to the material needs of life; as he once acknowledged to Tommaseo, in the wakeful hours of the night his active thoughts would perhaps run over the work of the coming day; but it is probable that we must look higher for the reason, for he openly avowed that his doctrine was more a gracious gift of God than the result of study. Father Signini, who often spoke confidentially to him, said once in a familiar way: "Father, it is said that Origen could keep seven secretaries at work, dictating different subjects to each; how many could you employ?" To this he replied with simple condescension: "Four, I should think; but it would be a great effort, and I do not suppose I could continue it long." Perhaps we may consider that in these days, when people write more rapidly, his four secretaries would equal Origen's seven.

A quarter of an hour before midday was devoted to examination of conscience, and after he had dined he took the customary recreation. Allusion has been made to his affability in conversation and his kindly condescension to those who preferred to speak on ordinary subjects, while at times he would entertain learned men with lofty questions of interest to themselves. Vito Fornari, a worthy witness, says, *he spoke well on all topics*, though in the simplest

[1] Rom. xiii. 12. [2] Eph. iv. 24.

language and without affectation. His words were full of light and fervour, and—as another illustrious witness, Tancredi Canonico, has aptly remarked—one felt their fervour even before seeing the light. Most frequently his conversation ended in God, whose wisdom, goodness, and beauty he magnified in accents that seemed inspired and moved one to holy thoughts and affections, so that it was almost impossible to converse with him and not find oneself improved in life and in spirit.

The Litany of Loreto was recited at the conclusion of the afternoon recreation, and a short rest of half-an-hour at most, was succeeded by lighter occupations than his studies of the morning. These were usually the despatch of letters or writing newspaper articles and other less important treatises. Later on he refreshed his spirit by some reading, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin, which he never omitted. Almost every day, especially during the last years of his residence at Stresa, he took a walk with a companion along the side of the beautiful lake, and his thoughts easily rose from the wonderful beauties of this material world to those of intelligent nature, then on still higher to the infinite beauty of Him who had made all these beautiful things; where they rested, adoring in spirit and in truth. Occasionally, in a retired spot, he would go down to the water's edge with his intimate friends, and, gathering up some nice smooth stones, set to work to play at ducks and drakes; it was quite a pleasure to see how he enjoyed watching his pebble skim the water and distance those of his companions: an innocent amusement, which will not appear unbecoming in the philosopher and the priest if we call to mind the eagle of the Apostles, the ecstatic saint of Patmos, amusing himself with a pet bird. After a frugal supper and a short recreation the day was closed by a visit to the Oratory, where he read some passages from the Gospel and explained them by way of preparation for the next day's meditation, after which he retired to his cell.

This was the order of his daily life, from which he never deviated except through necessity; all his actions were beautified by this regularity, while his time and his power of doing good were multiplied.

Time spent in travelling may easily be lost through want of occupation, and being unemployed it becomes most dangerous to the soul. For this reason Father Rosmini never allowed the members of the Institute to undertake a journey without necessity, nor to spend a single hour on the journey more than it required; "For," he said, "all useless travelling is a distraction, and contrary to perfection." He was accustomed to give them salutary advice when about to travel; they were carefully to preserve interior recollection, to watch over their thoughts, to guard their senses, to be reserved in speech, remembering the sentence, "Beware of men," and to keep in the safe company of their guardian angel and our Blessed Lady. On starting they were to recite the "Prayers for a Journey," and at the end the *Te Deum* or other prayers of thanksgiving, and during its course they were to pray much, and, in fact, continually. "Journeys," he said, "are the best opportunities for prolonged prayer, because we can do little else." He likewise suggested that, both when travelling and in shorter expeditions from home, a spiritual book should be taken to fill up free intervals of time, which on those occasions are frequently neither few nor short. In this matter also he was a potent teacher, his instructions being impressed and made forcible by his own example. "It was delightful to travel with him," says Father Signini; "in the carriage he was deeply recollected and prayed much. He spoke either of what touched on our duties, or of things adapted to enlighten the mind on some scientific matter, or a passage from Holy Scripture, to our great profit; but he did this with the greatest simplicity and modesty, never making it wearisome, on the contrary, he enlivened the conversation from time to time with some pleasant remark." A good lay-brother, who accom-

panied him on the short journey from Calvario to Novara, noticed that he repeated very frequently the words, "May the will of God be done!" Canon Antonio Zaneboni tells us how greatly he was edified at the Father's piety and exemplary modesty when he accompanied him from Lodi to Rovereto, and was invited by him to recite some prayers on the journey. Although he was silent at times, his thoughts were not idle or rambling, as the following little incident will prove. He was going somewhere with Father Signini, and they walked on for a time in silence, when suddenly he turned to his companion and said: "Oh! what would I not give to have five minutes with St. Thomas! I am sure we should understand each other and be in perfect agreement"; having said this, he again relapsed into silence. Another proof is furnished in the "Diary of Journeys," which he began as a youth, and always took with him when travelling, to keep a record of the most notable events, persons and things he might meet, the impressions he received, and everything that seemed to him most worthy of remembrance. In this diary we read, for instance, some pages written at Florence on the evening of the 3rd of May 1823, after he had inspected in the course of the day a number of works of art, ancient and modern. These pages, hastily jotted down, are precious on account of the lofty and singularly beautiful thoughts expressed about pagan and Christian art, the differences between Greek and modern forms, the various kinds of beauty exhibited in these forms, the reasons of their diversity, and the method of solving the question whether the Christian religion has promoted the development of the fine arts, and to what extent. Some pages not less valuable were written at Mantua on the evening of the 30th of July 1824, having been thought out during his return from Modena. They contain a new method of resolving equations of the second grade, with the whole process of the algebraical working towards the proposed solution, beginning with the general principle that the solution of equations depends on the

nature of the numbers and of the operations performed with regard to them. These are indications enough to show how wisely Father Rosmini employed the time which so many lose, or rather squander, to their own great detriment, but which he regarded as a talent that never remains unfruitful in the hands of a skilful merchant.

CHAPTER XXXI

PORTRAIT OF ANTONIO ROSMINI

Father Rosmini was of middle height, with a fine, well-proportioned figure, his head rather large. The lineaments of his countenance resemble Dante in their noble severity, and Vela the sculptor declared it to be of Dante's type as soon as he saw the plaster cast; yet our Father's nobility of feature was softened by an expression of benignity more cordial than that of the Florentine. The high, broad forehead was boldly compared by Tommaseo for its grandeur to the wide expanse of the heavens; it was crowned by a mass of chestnut hair in youth, which long before his death had turned quite grey, not through the weight of years, but as a consequence of his long and serious meditations and the sufferings of body and mind which were his portion; his eyes were large and clear, with a thoughtful expression, and so penetrating that you felt he could read your soul; the chin was somewhat prominent. His whole bearing was strikingly dignified, without any assumption of superiority, while his constant gentle smile and the cheerful expression of his countenance rendered him most agreeable. In the last years of his life, however, there was a touch of sadness in his smile; perhaps it was caused by the grief felt by holy souls at the sight of the wickedness of men, a sorrow that makes them sigh and long for the termination of their exile, or it may have been the pain he felt, not so much at seeing that no one appeared to follow him to the lofty height his thoughts had reached, as at seeing himself contradicted by those who were unable to take so sublime a flight; he may have had some foreknowledge of the injury such passionate contradiction would inflict, not only on

the Institute so dear to his heart, but on Christian society and on mankind in general. These hidden tribulations, whose depth God alone could appreciate, never disturbed his interior peace, nor did they succeed in clouding the serenity of his brow; which, if it was sometimes slightly marked by lines of deep thought, was never wrinkled through anger or darkened by contempt or other outbursts of passion. As we usually see in persons possessed of strong affections, the sudden emotions of his soul were clearly visible in his looks, his words, and his whole appearance, which was now amiable, now venerable, at times solemn, even terrible in its power. His countenance and his whole person seemed to beam with joy at the sight of any ray of truth or beauty, like the famous statue which gave forth harmony at the first ray of the sun. In conversation his words were often animated, the colour rose to his face, and the perspiration would stand on his forehead even in the depth of winter; this was when the subject of the discourse was God or Divine truth. Sometimes an aureola of light seemed to encircle his brow and transfigure him into the semblance of an angel; these were occasions when his meditations or prayers were filled with thoughts of Heaven. There were times when the humble priest almost seemed to increase in stature, to become gigantic, and his aspect flashed with an awe-inspiring grandeur; it was in defence of the rights of truth and justice down-trodden by men, that he could thus display his power. No one who had ever met a man like this, if only once, could forget him; many who came to see him with their minds strongly prejudiced found themselves suddenly changed, as if by enchantment, and drawn towards him by ties of reverence and love, such was the grace that shone in his majesty, the humility in his decorum, the sweetness combined with his austerity, and the light of sanctity that shed its radiance over all the natural qualities of mind and heart.

This is a portrait of Antonio Rosmini as far as external appearance goes; the picture of the interior man as it

presents itself to my mind is far beyond any words of mine to express. The reader who has observed in the life of this great man the development of his early years, with all the harmonious gradations of thought, affection, and benevolent exertion, the happy combination of nature and grace, the wonderful concord of all the powers of his soul brought into unity by a mighty will always directed to the cultivation of the true, the beautiful, and the good ; the reader who has admired the brightness of his genius made still more glorious by his virtue, a virtue always shining, without any of those alternations of faintness or gloom not unfrequent in the lives of holy men—the reader will be able to trace for himself that portrait which the pen dares not attempt for fear of profaning it by words unworthy of such a subject. Let us bow down together before the Divine Artificer, Who deigned to impress so deeply on our Father's soul traces of His own greatness.

THE END

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